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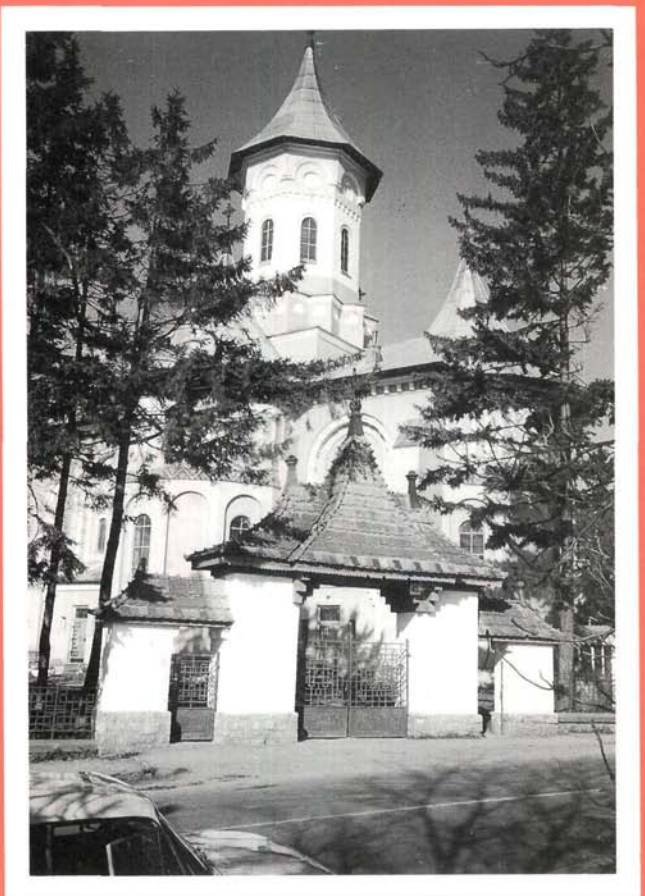

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The "African Eve" Theory in Light of Paleontological Evidence for the Outward Diffusion of Hominids

Brunetto Chiarelli
University of Florence

The Earliest Identifiable Hominid Ancestor

The only fossil remains to be considered as those of the earliest identifiable ancestor of the Hominids, or of the Hominid-Pongid separation, are:

a) *Kenyapithecus Africanus* and *K. wickeri* of the Middle Miocene, from 16 to 12.5 million years ago, found in East Africa (Maboko, Fort Ternan, Nachola, Buluk, Muruym);
b) a jaw-bone comparable to the form of *Kenyapithecus* and datable to 8 to 10 million years ago, which was recently discovered by a Japanese paleo-anthropological group, led by Hidemi Ishida, in the valley of Suguta, in the North of Kenya;
c) a mandible found by a French-American expedition, led by Martin Pickford and Glen Conroy, in the Namibian mountains in Spring 1991, dated between 15 and 10 mya.

No other significant fossil evidence of the earliest representatives of the Hominid line prior to the first forms of Australopithecines of 4-3 million years ago have yet been discovered. Thus there is still is a gap in the fossil record of about 3-4 million years.

In the last 12 million years sub-Saharan Africa underwent climatic changes because of the tectonic movements which created the Rift Valley. The climate became drier and the forests were replaced by bushveld and savannas. In eastern regions especially, some apes had to learn to live in a new environment: open plains where a specialized cleverness was necessary to survive. About 6-5 million years ago they began to evolve into *Australopithecus*, with erect

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posture and a higher encephalic quotient. Climate change was at the origin of this development. In East Africa pre-hominidae had to survive in a territory with few scattered trees, bordering the savannas. A number of transformations took place, due to the new environment and its novel incentives: food gathering, escaping from danger, new sexual behaviour (because of erect posture), manual activities and hunting. The other apes (gorillas and chimps) biologically closely related to man have, on the contrary, continued their life in forest environments. Studies on biochemical, genetic and karyological traits of Man and Apes show their close relationship. A and 0 blood groups and immunological characters are sufficiently similar as to allow blood transfusions and organ transplantations between Apes and Man.

The most ancient form of *Australopithecus* found, all fossils being very fragmentary, are without doubt the ones of Lukeino dated to 6 million years ago and of Chemenon dated to 4-5 mya. The most famous is *Australopithecus afarensis* (3.2 mya) discovered in the Afar of Ethiopia. We must also attribute to this group the foot prints of Laetoli in Tanzania datable to 3.7 million years ago.

The Australopithecines then differentiated into various forms, some more robust (*A. robustus*, *A. boisei*), others more delicate (*A. africanus*) even if some paleontologists consider them to be divisions between sexes or local variants. However, about 3-1.5 million years ago, they greatly expanded south and, to a greater extent, north of the Rift Valley.

The Australopithecines, if not directly a part human evolutionary line are certainly closely related; they constitute an interesting example of adaption to a savanna environment.

The Australopithecines are characterized by their relatively reduced dimensions, with a stature of little more than a metre; by their powerful chewing apparatus with small canines and molarized premolars; their erect posture; a brain organized in a human way even if much smaller reduced (about 500 cc) and by their shortened limbs, which are, however, ideal for climbing.

Still in Africa (Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Africa), about 2 million years ago a more modern form of human ancestor appeared, given the name of *Homo habilis* by L. Leakey, P. Tobias and J. Napier in 1964.

H. habilis must have been about 130-140 cm tall, weighing about 40 kg. Its posture was definitely erect, it had a greater endocranial

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capacity and made tools.

The origin of the Hominids in the eastern region of Africa was coincided with the aforementioned climatic change. During the Late Miocene the equatorial forest, which spread from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, was affected by the sinking of the Rift Valley and was greatly reduced in the east because of the changes in the rain system. The Hominids present in these territories had to adapt to a landscape with reduced vegetation, a more open environment with a tendency to savanna (Pickford, 1990). In this environment major changes took place in the Hominids, induced by new behavioural developments to avoid danger, to find food, to correctly use the sexual stimulus, and to handle tools. The savanna environment was very different from the forest in which the Apes (Gorilla and Chimpanzee) continued t0 live. The environment forced great adaptive changes in the human line although in their basic biology the African Apes remain closely related to Man.

The heterogeneity of the environment in the Rift Valley and the mobility of these first populations of hunters may have led to isolation, karyological microspeciation and the subsequent reduction in genetic mixing potential between populations. With the passing of passing of generations a specific differentiation could have taken place with the formation, in the first instance, of what Mayr calls twin species.

The rich and varied environment of the Rift Valley and the mobility of those hunting groups probably resulted in a sequence of small isolated populations and karyological microspeciations, with consequent reduction in genetic interchange. In this period, a chromosomal centric fusion took place, leading to a reduction from 48 (apes) to 46 (man), together with other karyological differentiations which reproductively divided man from the apes.

Perhaps highly diversified populations – because of different chromosome modifications and re-organization – met again and interbred with a mechanism of "introgressive hybridization". The result has been the elimination of one or both parental lines, and the formation of new populations. Such an event could have given rise to an extremely adaptive, variable and radiative species, that is, to the initial phase of BUNT (Corruccini, 1990). Mankind was cradled in the Rift Valley with new characteristics which actively influenced the environment (peculiar social organization, group hunting, tool making, language).

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In two million years, Australopithecinae developed into *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus* and then into *Homo sapiens*. During this evolution, brain size increased from 500 cc to 1400 cc. The selective pressure responsible for the increase of the brain size has to be found in the new ecological niche occupied by the evolving hominids, with their new abilities in tool making, hunting and social living. One million years ago, *Homo erectus* was present in Africa, Europe and Asia; during this million years he developed into *Homo sapiens*.

At least two patterns have been suggested for this last phase of human evolution:

1) Multiregional or polycentric pattern. According to this hypothesis, the traits of modern human populations developed during the last half million years from different populations of *Homo erectus* adapted to different geographical environments; only in recent times have the populations interacted with gene exchange to create the so called "metamorphic" populations (Wolpoff, 1989a).
2) The African radiation pattern. According to this hypothesis, a line of modern human beings originated in Africa 200,000 years ago (the so called African Eve); 92,000 years ago they settled in the regions of modern Lebanon and Israel, from which they invaded the rest of the old world and created all modern populations, destroying pre-existing groups.

This pattern is based on a recent and still controversial reinterpretation of some fossil remains of *Homo sapiens* found in Africa, following a hypothesis based on a molecular clock of mitochondrial DNA. The cell nucleus of each vegetable or animal organism contains DNA; however DNA can also be found in the mitochondria, where DNA controls the main energetic reactions. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) results from cytoplasmic inheritance, and therefore comes almost exclusively from the mother. According to the supporters of this theory, because of this female heritability, mitochondrial mutations can be followed through generations and utilized as a molecular clock. But molecular clocks can be reliable only 1) when homologous regions of the DNA molecule can be compared; 2) when the mutation rate is constant and the clock is

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carefully calibrated on an exact date. Even if the first condition could be satisfied, the second raises a lot of questions.

There is no sure knowledge or agreement on the mutation rate of mtDNA. Some researchers place it around 0.7% in a million years (115 mutations); others, up to 4% (660 mutations). With a slow, inconstant mutation rate, supporters of this theory maintain that we can trace back our ancestors to 400,000 years ago, (the time of *Homo erectus*); with a constant, fast mutation rate, the origin of *Homo sapiens* could be set not later than 150,000 years ago, when fossil remains indicate that *Homo sapiens* already existed. However, L. Excoffier and colleagues (1989, 1990), utilizing the same mtDNA method worked out by Roberta Cann and her group, showed that Mongoloid populations are as old as the African groups they would have derived from. Therefore the use of mtDNA to determine the origin of our species is not reliable. Additionally, data from fossils older than 40,000 years do not agree with the hypothesis of a recent origin for the *Homo sapiens* line. The evolutionary and genetic continuity of the hominids of the upper Paleolithic is agreed upon by most anthropologists and population geneticists with zoo-geographic competence. The fascinating picture of an "African Eve" in the context of a re-evaluation of a monophyletic origin of *Homo sapiens* is, in my opinion, an arrogant and superficial simplification which is scientifically unsupported, and likely to give rise to a new kind of racism with violence and prevarication as the only evolutionary forces in the human species.

Discussion about the above patterns is still open. For Europe, there are some doubts about the monophyletic hypothesis of the evolution of modern man via *Homo erectus - Neanderthalians - Homo sapiens sapiens*, the latter dated 40,000-35,000 years ago (Mellars and Stringer, 1989). For Asia, there is more evidence of a certain continuity. Some Mongoloid morphological traits, for example in the skull bones of Incas, were already present in populations of *Homo erectus* in China 500,000 years ago (Liu, 1985) and intermediate types found in East Asia suggest a gradual shift from *Homo erectus* to *Homo sapiens*. In this case, therefore, there is less doubt about the validity of the multiregional pattern.

In Europe documented fossil remains are frequent, simply because Europe is the place were most research has occurred, but other parts of the world were populated at that time. However in the late Paleolithic, human populations moved to America and Australia,

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while other hominids kept on developing in Asia and in Africa. Individuals belonging to those populations lived and moved in small troops of hunters and gatherers, facing and adapting to a number of different environments. Probably some of the social characters of modern mankind, such as family and a paternal figure, were organized in that period, even if fossil evidence of such an organization is still missing.

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ESSAYS ON GERMANIC RELIGION

EDGAR C. POLOMÉ
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Prigoginean Thermodynamics and the Human Brain

F. J. Irsigler
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The paper is divided into three sections:
I. *Heterochrony.* It refers to sudden, disruptive events in the functional (space-time) relationship between phylogeny and ontogeny (de Beer 1930, F. Jacob 1870, Gould 1977). In the view of modern "Evolution by Law", heterochronic events coincide with heteromorph speciation, including the human species (L. Berg 1922, 1969, Groves 1989).
II. *Subjectivity: Dissipative Structures.* Living beings require for stabilization in a state of instability matter and energy exchange with the environment. This defines a quantity of semantic or "valued" information from the outside, selected in terms of group-specificity by the recipient organism. The exchange takes place in stage-like "phases", characterizing evolution of conscious phenomena ranging from animal consciousness to the self-conscious mind of our own species. The stages are described as the "eigen values" of Prigogine's "time evolution or entropy operator" (Prigogine and Stengers: 307).
III. *Ontogenetic Hemispheric Laterality.* Quantified allo-neocortical interdigitation reveals, in a sample of 128 measured brains, a sudden and age-dependent gain in allocortical potency in the right hemisphere of the modern *sapiens* brain. This paedomorph/neotenous event is viewed, in the light of heteromorph speciation, as signaling the emergence of a new adult phenotype whose crucial features are innate in our species. They suggest a group-conscious, visuo-spatial superiority contrasting the "objectivity" of the language-dominant hemisphere.

Heterochrony

It was well known to Haeckel. While his "biogenetic law" fell into disrepute, the notion of heterochrony reappeared, meaning sudden or "punctuational" events intervening in the causal chain from the Mendelian gene to the phenotype behavior. As such, they mark the origin of higher phylogenetical levels. Haeckel's "recapitulation" is now seen as one mode of a more general process: alteration of time of onset and rates of ontogenetic development (acceleration and/or retardation) (Garstang 1928, de Beer 1930, Sewertzoff 1931, Willis

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1940, Rensch 1971, Gould 1977, Tobias 1985). The process has been called "ontogenèse fondamentale" (Deshayes and Dambricourt-Malassé 1990) or "repetition-plus-addition" (Pirlot and Bernier 1991).

Heterochronic events imply a new type of causality (Prigogine and Stengers 1986: 427). They disrupt what the French molecular biologist F. Jacob has called "la logique du vivant", meaning "a univocal relation converting a series of organizations in space into an isomorph series of transformation in time" (Jacob 1970: 162, 318). This is a relation between two system of information: phylogenetical (reproductive) invariance and ontogenetical determinism.

In his Nobel Lecture in Chemistry entitled "Time, Structure and Fluctuations", I. Prigogine shows that non-equilibrium may become a source of "order through fluctuations". This order from disorder occurs in isolated systems far from thermodynamical equilibrium (Prigogine 1977: 2.8, 4, 5). According to the "theory of dissipative (space-time) structures", fluctuations trigger distinct stages of instability requiring, in living systems, exchange of matter and energy (information) with the environment. Breaking the space-time symmetry of classical dynamics, the stages of instability result in a succession of bifurcations (Prigogine and Stengers: 232, 371). The latter coincide with stages of (tel)encephalization characterizing evolution of the mammalian brain from the jurassic mammal-like reptiles upwards. Thus, bifurcations define, in evolutionary terms, group-specificity and species-typical behavior (Groves 1989, Irsigler 1991). It follows that fluctuations define a privileged direction of evolution, that is, irreversibility The destabilizing effect of fluctuations explains the "jumps" in the fossil record (Schindewolf). It is at variance with Darwinian "gradualism" as well as with the "cumulative selection" theory of modern times based on nonblending or "digital" information transfer from gene to phenotype (Dawkins). The problem thus reduces to the "conflict" between organism and environment. It is summarized by F. Jacob in his "logique du vivant" (1970: 185), who states: "Le milieu ne fait jamais que répondre." Translated into the language of irreversible thermodynamics: "Cette fluctuation s'amplifie ensuite et organise le milieu" (Prigogine and Stengers: 223).

It is the state of intrinsic instability, measurable in units of distance from equilibrium, which makes the organism susceptible to and dependent on outside intervention. Individual and group-specific behavior becomes decisive in the choice of a privileged response.

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Both depend on the group's "internal time" or "âge biologique" which, in turn, is determined, in accordance with the Second Thermodynamic Law, by "microscopic entropy" (Prigogine and Stengers: 237, 341ff., 431).

The importance of amplification in the rise of new species or "morphs" has been emphasized, in the context of positive feedback, by P. V. Tobias in his J. Arthur Lecture on the evolution of the brain (Tobias 1971: 144ff.). According to this principle, an initial reinforcing push or "kick", often small in extent, will set in motion a sequence of bifurcations to diverge from the initial condition. Tobias mentions, as a possible repetitive event, the emergence, in some Pliocine semi-terrestrial pongids, of a tool-using branch, practicing rudimentary hunting.

The split in the Late Pliocine (some two or three million years before the present) was formerly thought to have resulted in a "gracile" and "robust" lineage leading to man. However, as Tobias (1985: 133ff.) suggests, this heterochronic event generated three derivative lineages: *Homo* in South and East Africa, *Australopithecus robustus* in Southern Africa leading to *A. boisei* in East Africa, and finally a late *A. africanus* in Southern Africa with Taung as its latest representative (E. Mayr).

The heterochronic (stage-like) mode and tempo of evolution has been developed since the twenties into the "nomogenetic" theory of "evolution by law" (*nomos* = law). The terminology is due to the Russian L. Berg whose original paper of 1922 became known in the West by 1969.

In his comprehensive *Theory of Human and Primate Evolution* C. P. Groves (1989) summarizes the modified and elaborated nomogenetic theory as follows:

> (1) The fast-evolving lineage leading to *H. sapiens* is geologically young and was stenotopic and demic right from the start, being characterized by new species or subspecies which appear suddenly and with high variability.
> (2) The most marked evolutionary jumps are heterochronic in origin and character, occurring in the centre of the ranges of their parent species or of one particular subspecies, called "centrifugal" or "heteromorph speciation".

Summary. Heterochrony refers to lawful, but non-adaptive events suddenly intervening in the space-time relationship between phyloge-

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ny and ontogeny. These events correspond to "instabilities" triggered by fluctuations inherent in systems far from thermo-dynamical equilib-
rium. The fluctuations are amplified through group-specific information from the environment, and result in successive bifurcations giving rise to new evolutionary characters and higher phylogenetical types.

II. Subjectivity: Dissipative Structures

Controversy arises from C. S. Sherrington's antinomy of the world as "the manifestation of the brain" and as "perceived in consciousness", versus "the physico-chemical world" (Karczmar and Eccles 1972: 17).

The French Nobel laureate J. Monod (1970: 37) regards the field of subjectivity--that of consciousness itself--as a sterile vitalist speculation. His "objective world" is governed by causal and temporal precedence and denies any "final causes". This leads him to a flagrant contradiction, since living beings pursue and accomplish a "project" or "purpose" implying a relation between living structures and function, or, in terms of "subjectivity", an act of judgment capable of being more or less consciously perceived as "meaning", and thus becoming "knowledge" (Piaget 1971) or "Erkenntis" (Riedl 1980) in the sense of K. Lenz' behaviorism.

The mathematician and philosopher A. N. Whitehead recalls in his *Science and the Modern World* (1949: 185) the famous essay by William James "Does Consciousness Exist?" (1904), concluding that consciousness is not an entity in its own right (Wesenheit) but a function, being presupposed by necessity to explain the fact that things not only do exist but are experienced and valued. This rejects both Descartes' two "entities" and Monod's "objectivity postulate". The latter leads, according to G. M. Edelman (1989: 268), to "anachronism and a vicious circle". It implies what Prigogine and Stengers call "la fin de l'objet galiléen" (Prigogine and Stengers: 300ff.).

The functional character of "consciousness" in man and animal raises the question of the multiplicity of relations between experience and physical processes, that is, the problem of the living structure. In Whitehead's words: "There is a becomingness of structure, almost a relation becoming a substance. A structural togetherness is being realized" (*Science and the Modern World* 1949: 276). This relation has

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been called "Kantian" or "the transcendent Self" (Stent 1975, Popper and Eccles 1977). Is it "transcendent"?

According to Piaget's "structuralism" (1973: 5), structure is a system of transformation "which never yield results external to the system nor employ elements that are external to it". More explicitly, Piaget's "Affective Unconscious and Cognitive Unconscious" represent a hidden or internal mechanism which imposes on the subject one form of thinking rather than another. The Piagetian "structure" is constructed by the subject through progressive coordination of the latter's actions and, simultaneously, by means of information provided by experience: both contribute to the "Copernican revolution", meaning organization of the external world according to temporal sequence and causality (Piaget 1976: 14, 64).

The indispensable intervention from outside in the developmental process is described by the Geneva structuralist school as the "break-up" of instinct which occurs in anthropoids and man. It is followed by a new cognitive evolution starting from scratch, and henceforth under phenotypical control by the "social group" which replaces "the genetic prop".

R. Sperry, the father of the American "split-brain" school, envisages a special central system for consciousness or "the conscious self" whose crucial features are "presumably innate in each species and largely preorganized independently of sensory input" (Sperry 1983: 95). However, Sperry adds, "the system must include a continual registration of the changing body schema in reference to which sensory input is consciously perceived." This view makes consciousness a causal determinant in control of lower cerebral functions, in the sense of Whitehead's "substance" and Aristotelian *physei*.

Finally, we consider Popper and Eccles' "liaison brain", the structural element of their "dualist-interactionist" hypothesis. The "liaison brain" is conceived as ensembles of privileged neurones (Szentágothai's "modules") in the dominant (left) hemisphere (perhaps also in the right or minor half). These neurones are said to be "open or half-open to the conscious world". However, the two authors agree that there are higher and lower forms of consciousness, including what they call "animal consciousness" (Popper and Eccles 1977: 309, 519, 535).

Edelman's "global" theory of consciousness, developed in his "Theory of Neuronal Group Selection" (1989) is akin to Popper and

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Eccles' "modular" type, but it does not account for the cardinal feature of conscious phenomena: hemispheric lateralization.

It is the functional (or relational) character of "consciousness" which is misrepresented, in the dualist-interactionist view, as the transcendent "self". In Sperry's "mentalist" (or "holistic") approach, consciousness is a Jamesian "entity" *per se*, endowed with causal determinacy. Whitehead's "relation becoming a substance" (1949: 5) takes an intermediate position to avoid what he calls "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead 1949: 66).

Here we treat the problem of interaction between sensory input and conscious phenomena at the human and subhuman levels in the light of heterochronic instabilities (Section I), related to the constructive role of entropy exchange between outside and inside (Prigogine 1977: 2.1). This corresponds to deriving irreversibility from reversible basic mechanisms, as E. Schrödinger (1967: 87) puts it, referring to Planck's distinction between "the dynamical and the statistical type of law".

At the stages of instability the living systems become susceptible to and dependent on the environment regarding nutrition and information of value to the individual and the group: a dynamic state called "dissipative" and characterized thus: "toute petite variation est susceptible ... de déporter le système d'un état à un autre très différent, explorant l'ensemble de 'l'espace des phases'" (Prigogine and Stengers: 13). This marks the transition from Jacobian isomorphism to heteromorphism revealing the genetic character of heterochronic events (*ibid.* 231, 343).

This reveals consciousness *per se* as a multiplicity of relations between outside and inside, established by selective signals (signs and symbols) which convey the group-specific "meaning" called *Gestalt* (Levy *et al.* 1972, Stent 1975, Irsigler 1976, 1991, 1992a and b).

These relations require, in man and animal, specific "dissipative" structures in space-time contact with the species-typical *Umwelt* defined as the whole of meaningful "forms" (Kant) or "perspectives" (Aristotle).

The concept of **information** is crucial in understanding the subjectivist controversy (Prigogine and Stengers: 284). Information is introduced through the far-from-equilibrium instabilities of living systems requiring for stabilization outside intervention: (a) orderliness (Schrödinger: 79), that is, information (energy) measured in entropy

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units, also called "negentropy"; it is quantitatively defined by the famous Planck-Boltzmann formula; (b) individual selection of information provided by the environment, representing "semantic" information or "information of value" with respect to reproduction (Brillouin 1971: 3, 297, Eigen 1971: 517).

This involves (a) a **circular movement**, the closed loop reproductive invariance, representing the space-time symmetry of the "Classics"; (b) a **break** in this symmetry, implying the one-sidedness of time (irreversibility) and distinction between past and future. It generates a multiplicity of individual deviations at the macroscopic level which through fluctuations become determinant. The succession of points of departure is described by the "entropy" or "time evolution operator". It describes the existence of a function ≥ 0, called "dissipativity" (Prigogine 1977: 7.6, Prigogine and Stengers: 371). The notion of instability presupposes the coexistence of deterministic and statistical elements and suggests, analytically, replacement of the time parameter in Schrödinger's equation with the parameter of implication (Lestienne: 80).

Evolution then runs in distinct "phases" of instability occurring in dissipative structures far from thermodynamic equilibrium and in space-time contact with the environment. Their singular activity is not rooted in causal and temporal precedence, but in the quasi-timeless (cognitive and affective) relation "if-then" (Eigen 1988: 146).

The heterochronic (space-time converting) structures evolve *pari passu* with bifurcating events in the mammalian brain from the Jurassic mammal-like reptiles upwards. The "structuralist school" calls them "les zones entre le sujet et l'object" and the relation they establish "le cercle initial" or "inévitable", but not "vicieux".

The **dissipative structures** include:

(1) the limbic or palaeo-mammalian system *sensu lato*. To it belong: (a) the reptilian-type brain or "reptilian driver", that is, the cholinergic olfacto-striate complex and the periaqueductal grisea. These formations generate the species-typical vocalization with its semantics and syntax, and are present in animals ranging from reptiles to man (MacLean, Lenneberg); (b) the neuromediator or "paracrine" core of the central nervous system. It is involved in hormonal feedback essential in socio-emotional and reproductive behavior. It constitutes the "chemo-architecture" of the brain (Nieuwenhuys). It largely coincides with the limbic system proper, being the vehicle of "information circulante" (Laborit).

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As a whole, the reptilian-palaeo-mammalian cortices and pathways convey meaning through signs and symbols in man and animal (Pribram). They degenerate in senile dementia of the Alzheimer's type (Nieuwenhuys: 172). If destroyed in monkeys, simian behavior disappears. In man, they provide "the avenues to the basic personality" (MacLean 1978: 49). In clear distinction from the olfactory, the limbic structures are accelerated and enlarged regarding growth and cortical differentiation from the prosimiae upward, culminating in man (Stephan and Andy, Stephan 1983). This reveals their heterochronic (dissipative) character and origin.

(2) the fronto-temporal neocortex (Spatz' "basale Rinde"). It is initially and selectively involved in the Pick-type of presenile dementia showing progressive cortical atrophy which results in the loss of human personality, the "core of being human" (Spatz). It includes the orbito-insulotemporal polar region and the late-myelinized "infratemporal sector" of Flechsig (Spatz 1937, Spatz and Lüers 1957, Jakob 1979). In human ontogeny, the differentiation of the "basal neocortex" is retarded, showing a sequence dislocation which counterrules Haeckel's model (Sanides 1975). The heterochronic retardation (C. & O. Vogt, Fleschig, Spatz, Kahle) proves the dissipative function at the neocortical level.

Dissipativity is indeed the distinguishing trend in evolution leading to *H. sapiens*. It means, structurally, integration of old and new cortices indispensable for cognition and emotion at the human and subhuman levels. This has been called "schizo-physiology" (MacLean 1958).

Through the heterochronic emergence of dissipative structures dissociating phylogeny and ontogeny in relation to each other, the living being, interacting with the environment, participate in evolution (Wheeler 1973, Prigogine and Stengers: 364). Participation culminates in man: the observer becomes a partner, and the "conflict" resolves itself in a new "dialogue".

In this sense, the emergence of conscious phenomena is indeed "the most critical step" in evolution (Sperry 1964: 2). Before brains appeared, the whole drama--*Divina Commedia*--was a mere "play before empty benches" without color, sound and feeling.

Summary. The subjectivist argument arises from a misconception of "consciousness" as an "entity" *per se*, instead of as a function or relation. Conscious phenomena emerge in space-time converting

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structures called "dissipative", in the mammalian brain since the mammal-like reptiles. They coincide with heterochronic events of instability and establish a group-specific, implicative (cognitive-affective) relation between organism and environment. This relation, called "semantic" or "valued information" requires a source and a recipient capable of valuing and selecting. It is the driving force for evolution (Eigen 1971).

III. Ontogenetic Hemispheric Laterality

III.1 *Quantification.* Since 1979 a method of quantification of biological information transfer has been developed in cooperation with three South African Institutes for Biostatistics and Computation. Not information as such was to be measured, but the relation between two systems of information, called the "Jacobian morphism" (Section I, *supra*).

The method rests on the principle of morphogenesis, that is, allo-isocortical interpenetration (Edinger 1909) or interdigitation (Braak 1980). This means, in terms of structure, the ratio of the infratemporal base (B) or allocortex *sensu lato* (Stephan and Andy) to the isocortex covering the convexity (C) of the temporal area taken at the greatest extension of (B). The ratio was called the "neocorticalization index": NI=B/C. In functional terms, it corresponds to Prigogine's exchange of entropy between the inside and the outside (Prigogine 1977: 2.1), that is, the relation between phylogenetical (reproductive) and ontogenetical (semantic) information. The latter was called "teleonomic" by J. Monod (1972: 25) to mean all individual activities contributing to the species' survival and multiplication.

Material and method, and the rationale have been described in previous papers (Irsigler 1983, 1984, 1991, 1992). Our method is supported by G. E. Smith's (1928) observations in the Rhodesian (Broken Hill or Kabwe) skull, concerning the exceptionally slight development of the vertical direction (our C) compared with the greater width (B) of the temporal area, a "singular deficiency" compared with the higher types of human brain. Its significance is, according to Smith, enhanced by the fact that it involves "the areas which attain their full maturity latest in the process of development of the brain of the modern human child".

Table 1 gives the NI parameters and their statistical variance in one hundred measured brains (86 adults and 14 infants aged three

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years or less), computed by the Institute for Biostatistics, South African Medical Research Council, Johannesburg (1983).

Mean ages (years)	49.6	53.6	33.9	35.0	1.5
n	30	12	37	7	14
t-statistic	-2.80	-2.54	-4.76	-3.64	-3.68
p-value	0.0090**	0.0275**	0.000**	0.0111**	0.0028**
Right hemisph. mean	1.364	1.420	1.303	1.263	1.275
Stand. dev.	0.233	0.315	0.220	0.134	0.212
Left hemisph. mean	1.513	1.749	1.518	1.726	1.682
Stand. dev.	0.197	0.442	0.288	0.291	0.419
Population group	White males	White females	Black males	Black females	Black infants

Table 1

Statistical variance (mean values and standard deviations) of the basopallial (NI-)parameters obtained from 100 measured brains in five population groups according to their mean ages.
n, number of measured brains
t-statistics and p-values are given for the variable left-right difference compared with zero, to evaluate whether the measurements of the left side of the brain differ from those of the right side.
* means significant at $p < 0.05$
** means significant at $p < 0.01$
(Institute for Biostatistics, Johannesburg, 1983)

Here follows the comment by the Institute for Biostatistics (Dr. S. G. Reinach, July 5, 1983).

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"It is observed from the Table that the ages of the various groups differs considerably. The question arises whether these differences in age could play a role in any differences observed between the sexes and/or the races. A discriminate analysis shows: (a) when the grouping variable is race, the difference in age was the only distinguishing factor between the two races; when the grouping variable is sex, the variable left was able to distinguish significantly between the groups; (c) when age was forced in first, the variable left came in as a second classifying factor."

The results obtained by different methods of computation are essentially the same as those shown in Table 1. We therefore may draw from them the following inferences:
(1) There is clear allocortical prepotency in favor of the left (dominant) hemisphere in both races, both sexes and in the Negro infants aged three years and less.
(2) The degree of asymmetry between the two brain halves is greater in the Negroes compared with the Caucasians, indicating a trend toward left-hemispheric preponderance of "left-brainedness" in the African Negro. This confirms previous findings (Irsigler 1983, 1991).
(3) Infants. There were no Caucasian infants under three years available by 1983. In our final sample of 128 measured brains computed by the Centre for Advanced Computing and Decision Support in Pretoria, there were six white infants with the parameters displayed in Table 2.

	Right	**Left**
	1.093	1.305
Stand. dev.	0.154	0.155
t-statistic	-2.4845	
p-value	0.0278*	

Table 2

Statistical variance of NI-parameters in six Caucasian infants under three years of age.
(Centre for Advanced Computing and Decision Support, Pretoria, 1989).

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Comparing the two ethnic groups, one finds that ontogenetic development from infancy to adulthood is different: the African adults' parameters lie within those of their infants. In the Caucasians, the adults' and infants' parameters are mutually exclusive. This indicates a definite developmental precocity of the African Negro infant during the first years of life compared with the European infant of comparable age. This was discussed earlier (Irsigler, 1984, 1990, 1991).

III.3 Right-hemispheric Superiority

From Table 1 it is seen that, whereas the NI-parameters in the left hemisphere of both age groups are hardly different, they differ considerably in the right half of the brain, indicating a sudden and delayed regain of allocortical potency in the minor hemisphere of both sexes in the older age group.

The difference can be brought out more clearly by comparing the adjusted group means in the two hemispheres (Table 5) and by comparing the mean left-right differences in the two groups (Table 6).

Mean Age	n	Right	Standard error	Left	Standard error
50.7 yrs	42	1.410	0.04605	1.510	0.06442
34.0 yrs	44	1.298	0.03326	1.573	0.04653

Table 5

Adjusted group means in the right and left hemisphere of the two groups. n, number of measured brains (Institute for Biostatistics)

Mean age	n	Adjusted group mean	Standard error
50.7	42	0.100	0.079019
34.0	44	0.275	0.05070

Table 6

Mean left-right differences in the two age groups (Institute for Biostatistics)

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The two tables show, first, a major trend toward left-hemispheric preference in the younger (African) community, compared with the middle-aged (European) group; this has been discussed earlier (Irsigler 1983, 1984, 1990, 1991, 1992a, b); second, increased allocortical potency in the minor hemisphere of the Caucasian community which is, in our sample, on average 17 years older than the African natives, the determining factor being age, not race (Table 1). The phenomenon has been uniformly confirmed by different computational methods applied in the present work. It therefore requires interpretation in the light of heterochrony, that is, preceding thermodynamic instabilities dealt with in the preceding sections.

The group difference in onset and rate of ontogeny is confirmed by comparing the t-statistics and p-values of infants (Table 3) and those of adults versus infants (Table 4) in the two groups.

Black infants (n = 16) vs White infants (n = 8)	t-statistic 2.1252	p-value 0.0360*

Table 3

Comparing infants of the two groups shows a tendency towards significance* in the right hemisphere (Institute for Biostatistics, 1984)

Black adults (n = 44) vs Black infants (n = 16)	t-statistic 0.77832	p-value 0.4353
White adults (n = 42) vs White infants (n = 8)	3.3298	0.0012*

Table 4

Comparing adults with infants of the two groups shows a significant difference between the two ages only in the right hemisphere of the Caucasians. One-way analysis of covariance for the grouping variable and covariate age. Adapted test level 0.05/12 = 0.0042 (Institute for Biostatistics, 1984)

Living beings depend on exchange of matter and energy with the environment. This is a two-way process: in terms of the Second Law, entropy production represents a degradation of information (Prigogine and Stengers: 285). This is overcompensated ("overdetermined")

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by the selecting activity of the living system drawing semantic information or "negentropy" (Schrödinger, Brillouin) from the outside through the function of dissipative structures. A gain in allocortical potency in the right hemisphere therefore is equivalent to a gain in group-specific information endowing the minor half with a superiority, compared with the left, in choosing and modifying the species-typical *Umwelt*. It holds the species' own entropy production at a minimum.

It is abundantly clear from clinical and experimental (commissurotomy) evidence that fundamentally different perceptuo-cognitive nodes must be ascribed to and are owned by the two brain halves: a kind of "mental duplicity" (Sperry 1964). The language-dominant (left) hemisphere, superior in the analysis of "spatialized time", is deficient in direction apprehension of shape, such as recognition of faces, indispensable for group cohesion, in which the minor hemisphere is at advantage (Levy, Trevarthen and Sperry 1972, Levy 1982).

The superiority of the right hemisphere rests on its group-specificity, associated with the group's history, its "internal time". The French physicist Lestienne contrasts the everyday time sequencing in terms of cause and effect with "perception simultanée de l'avant and de l'après, du passé dans le présent" (Lestienne: 79). In thermodynamical language: "il faut décrire le chemin qui constitue le passé du système, énumérer les bifurcations traversées et la succession des fluctuations qui ont décidé de l'histoire réelle parmi toutes les histoires possibles" (Prigogine and Stengers: 231).

Group-conscious perception and thinking is emotionally loaded and expresses what R. B. Cattell (1972) has called "the emotional truth" of a given species in response to a given environmental condition.

The Lorenz behaviorist school has shown unequivocally that the evolution of knowledge follows a definite patterns. According to R. Riedl's *Biologie der Ekenntnis* (1980: 178ff.) the left hemisphere of our brain is specialized in inferring from past experience, called "Erfahrung" or "Deduktion", the right hemisphere being concerned with "Induktion" (Erwartung), that is, with things to come. The latter "transcend" actual experience but are anticipated within the species' "conscious" reach or orbit. Inductive thinking is alien to the "postulate of objectivity", as well as to Hume's positivism and its consequences. Roger Sperry (1983: 56ff.) regards the visuospatial

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superiority of the so-called minor hemisphere to be an "innate individuality" tied to a pattern of inheritance from parents to offspring "that effectively rules out environment, experience, or any known theory of child development or nurturance".

It is tempting to view the heterochronic event under discussion in the light of "evolution at two levels". This means, according to King and Wilson (1975), that macromolecules determining the genetic distance between two species, and anatomical and behavioral features can evolve at independent rates. A well-known model is provided by the South African Kalihari Bushmen or San people. Contrary to former thought, their ancestors looked as "juvenile" or "paedomorph" ("immature") long before their descendants became exclusively desert dwellers (Tobias 1978). Their paedomorphosis defines the San as a distinct ethnic or racial entity.

Summary. The heterochronic (paedomorph/neotenous) appearance of allocortical potency in the right hemisphere of modern *sapiens'* brain is here tentatively seen in the light of "evolution by law" as an epigenetic deviation (Lovtrup) or sequence dislocation (Sanides) characterizing group-specificity in the sense of transition to a new adult phenotype, be it species, subspecies or subspecific in grade. It follows in the steps of the sudden and rapid transposition at the time of emergence of the modern and Neandertal grade (Groves 1989, Irsigler 1992b).

The decisive conceptual step here is taken by the introduction of the function (or functional) called "internal time" or "âge biologique" (Prigogine and Stengers: 307, 343). Its crucial feature, group specificity, pushes the "limits to the scientific understanding of man" (Stent) a step further back.

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Politics and Religion in Moldova: A Case Study

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The Republic of Moldova, also known as Bessarabia, is currently a battleground between Romania and Russia, not only from a territorial point of view, but also from a religious standpoint. The battle is between the Romanian and the Russian Orthodox Patriarchates. The struggle has split the people of eastern Moldova and has embittered the relations between the two brotherly churches. The struggle has reminded the Romanians of many past injuries and grievances and has once again raised again sensitive questions.

What is the role of the church in the life of the Romanian people? What role did the Orthodox Church play in the history of the nation? And what can the Church do for Bessarabia?

This paper describes the evolution of Christianity among Romanians; stresses the evolution of Moldova's Orthodox Church and its interaction with the Russian Church; and focusses on the current struggle between the Patriarchates of Romania and Russia.

Early Christian Churches in Romania

The first links between what is now Romania and the Christian Church derive from Rome. According to early documents and linguistic evidence, the first Christians to arrive among the inhabitants of present-day Romania were Roman soldiers and colonists. They came with the Roman legions and settled in Dacia during the second and third centuries. More colonists followed in the footsteps of the army, and many veterans received land and settled in the new imperial province. Some of them were Christians.

The Romans occupied Dacia in 106 and abandoned it in 270 AD. Nevertheless, Roman influence began much earlier and continued long after the departure of its administration. The incorporation of Dacia into the Roman Empire radically changed the character of the country and of its inhabitants. The result was the Romanization of the local language and culture, and the gradual Christianization of the population.

The Romanian religious vocabulary is overwhelmingly of Latin

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origin and the most basic prayers, "The Lord's Prayer" and "The Credo," are expressed almost exclusively with Latin derivatives. There is also substantial archeological evidence in this regard.[1]

The first churches known on the present Romanian territory were founded in Dobrogea by the Black Sea, and they display a double, Roman and Greek influence. In the beginning, the congregations of these churches were persecuted and produced a number of martyrs. But when Emperor Constantine granted them freedom in 313 AD, they began to flourish. The city-port of Tomis, now Constanţa, became the bishop's seat and an important Christian center.[2]

For a while, Dobrogea was part of the Roman province of Scythia Minor, but when Rome fell in 476 AD, the province came under the control of Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, and under the religious jurisdiction of Constantinople. Through language and culture, the Romanians are tied to Rome and to the West; through faith and religious organization, however, they are tied to Constantinople and to the East.

The Slavic Arrival in the Area

Existing evidence indicates that the bishops of Tomis exercised their influence mostly south of the Danube, but that they also reached north of the Danube in what later became Wallachia and Moldova. Nevertheless, around 600 AD, the entire church organization of the Lower Danube collapsed under the pressure of the invading Slavs and Avars. Other eastern intruders arrived in the area over the next centuries, affecting the church and the indigenous population. During those centuries, the ancestors of the Romanian people retreated from the southern lowlands into the forested and mountainous center of the country.

With the passage of time, the indigenous population assimilated the invaders, including the Slavs who remained north of the Danube. With this process completed, probably by the 10th Century AD, the new nation and its language was given final shape. The Romanians absorbed Slavic blood, linguistic terms and names, and some cultural traits. Nevertheless, there is no recollection of this period in Romanian folklore or legends. By the time the first state entities appeared, there was only one national conscience and the people were already Christians. It was Christianity through osmosis, and Romanians are proud to say that as a nation they were "born"

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Christian. No known individual leader Christianized them.

During this era, the Romanian church fell under the influence of the Greeks and the Slavs. The cohabitation and intermixing with the Slavs modified the Romanian vocabulary and enriched it with Slavonic elements that were prominent in church ceremonies. Most of these words did have equivalents of Latin origin in Romanian and in time they disappeared or lost their medieval status.[3]

The long retention, first of Greek influence, and then of Old Slavonic as the religious and official language of the land, prevented Romanians from developing their natural links with western Europe. This had a negative effect on the evolution of all peoples in the area because western Europe gradually renewed itself and generated modern civilization, while eastern Europe and the Orthodox Church were left on the periphery.

When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, Moscow assumed leadership over the Eastern Church, and the evolution of Orthodoxy took a new turn. At that time, however, Wallachia and Moldova were already well organized and had themselves become centers of Orthodox Christian faith.

The Early Religious Organization

Romanian religious organization went hand in hand with the political organization in the area. The first known state entities were established in Transylvania and Banat as early as the 10th century. Byzantine documents mention several states as well as dioceses and episcopal seats in the area, dating from before the great schism of the Church in 1054 (*Romanian Orthodox Church*, p. 17).

Between the 11th and the 13th centuries, Transylvania was occupied by the Hungarians. It was also at this time that the Romanians began to descend from the Carpathian Mountains to reclaim the Danubian plains. The earliest churches and monasteries that are still standing in Romania go back to this period.

It is not known how these churches reacted to the division of the church into Orthodox and Catholic. It is simply assumed that Romanians continued their old traditions, and that through proximity they came under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. This was most likely a natural process, and probably did not require a conscious decision.

The schism further severed Romanians' contacts with their cultural and linguistic roots in Rome and in the West. Throughout

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history, this link has represented the chief source of cultural sustenance for the Romanian nation. Yet, historically, the Roman Catholic Church ignored the Romanians after this periopd, demeaned them, and even referred disparagingly to them. For example, Romanian bishops were called 'pseudo-bishops' (*ibid.*, p. 23).

The Romanian Principalities

Under Hungarian rule, many Transylvanian Romanians were compelled to profess Roman Catholicism and were eventually assimilated. Most of them, however, retained their Orthodox faith and interacted continuously with Romanians living east and south of the Carpathians. Then, after the official foundation of Wallachia in 1310 and of Moldova in 1359, the two principalities became the most important centers of Romanian life and culture.[4]

At about that time there was a Metropolitan Church at Vicina, a city on the right bank of the Danube near its delta. This diocese was increasingly threatened by the Tatars, the last Asian invaders of Europe. Under a mutual agreement, Prince Nicolae Alexandru Basarab moved the Metropolitan of Vicina to Wallachia, and in 1359 the transfer was approved by Constantinople. The first seat of the Metropolitan was Argeş. Later, it was transferred to Târgovişte, and in 1663, it was moved to Bucharest, where it has remained to this day.[5]

The recognition of the Moldavian Metropolitan Church was slower. The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, the highest religious authority of the Orthodox Church, insisted on appointing a Greek Metropolitan, while the local prince demanded a Moldavian religious leader. Constantinople eventually agreed and in 1401 it recognized the Metropolitan Church of Moldova. The initial seat of the new church was at Suceava, but it was later moved to Jassy, the capital of Moldova.[6] Ever since, Jassy has remained the second most important religious center in Romania. In the hierarchy of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Metropolitan who occupies this seat becomes the Patriarch of the country.

According to Orthodox tradition, the church organization accommodates itself to the political organization of the nation that it serves. The strength of this tradition was that it led to the formation of national churches. The weakness was that the church abdicated to a large degree its rights, and it subordinated itself to the leaders and authorities it served.

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From the time of their founding until the two principalities merged to form modern Romania, the two churches acted as independent organizations. They also interacted regularly with one another and with other sister churches in the Balkans, in Greece in particular, in the Middle East, in Russia, and in Ukraine. After the fall of Constantinople, they became, at least for a while, the most important centers of Orthodoxy in the region.

The two churches founded the earliest schools in each of the two principalities, but teaching was done in Old Church Slavonic or Greek and was of little or no benefit to the education of the local people. Nevertheless, they trained priests and printed books for several Orthodox countries, especially for many Orthodox churches in countries that at the time were part of the Ottoman Empire. They developed beautiful art and architecture, building exquisite churches, cathedrals, and monasteries.

Although founded later, the Principality of Moldova developed rapidly and reached its apogee before the Turks threatened its independence. Under Steven the Great (1459-1504), Moldova could compare itself with the great countries of the time. It was able to fight its neighbors successfully and it played at geo-politics on the regional level. Although Romanians had crossed the Dnestr River long before the principality had been founded, Moldavian princes, and especially Steven the Great, built fortresses along this river and consolidated this as the eastern boundary of the principality. Nevertheless, the influence of Moldova's church reached well inside what is today Ukraine.

The very first contacts between Steven the Great and the Duchy of Moscow were a bad omen, and later interaction proved even worse for the Romanians. The Russian Orthodox Church did nothing to alleviate the ordeal. In time, Russia became a much feared enemy of the Romanian people. During the following two centuries, the Christian help that the two principalities expected from Russia did not materialize.

Without support from outside and surrounded by enemies, both Moldova and Wallachia had to sign capitulation treaties with the Turks during the 16th century. By and large, these treaties were not vicious, but they generated dependency and social stagnation. On the positive side, the Turks did not have the right to settle in either Moldova or Wallachia, and they were not allowed to acquire land or to build mosques in the two countries.[7] Nonetheless, Romanians did

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not like the Turkish domination and tried repeatedly to rid themselves of it.

Since the Turks did not interfere with the church, Moldova continued to develop and to help other Orthodox churches. Petru Movila, for example, the educated son of a Moldavian prince, went to Ukraine and became the Metropolitan of Kiev (1633-1646). In this capacity, he founded the first school of higher education in Ukraine, and he played a very important role in the spiritual life of Ukrainians and Russians. Later, the academy he founded became the University of Kiev (*Romanian Orthodox Church*, p. 46).

During the 18th century, the Turks were still advancing westward toward the center of Europe while the Russians were advancing southward. Moscow's dream was to occupy Constantinople, and its slogan was to liberate the Christians from under the Turks. Moldova was caught between two giants.

As an Orthodox country, Moldova tried to ally itself with Russia, but the move backfired. In 1711 Prince Dimitrie Cantemir of Moldova sided with Peter the Great during the first Russo-Turkish war fought on Romanian land. The Russians lost the battle. Cantemir was forced into exile in St. Petersburg. As a direct consequence, the Turks no longer trusted the Romanians and for the next 110 years appointed Greek princes to administer the two principalities.

Another war between the two great eastern powers of the time was mediated by Vienna, and as a prize, Austria in 1775 extracted from Moldova its northern region. Later, Vienna gave it the name Bukovina. Half of this area, with some of the earliest Moldavian historical sites, is now in Ukraine.[8]

In 1812, following another Russo-Turkish war, Russia annexed Bessarabia, the eastern half of Moldova. Its southern portion adjacent to the Danube was returned to Romania in 1856 after the Crimean war, but annexed again by Russia in 1878. Only in 1918, shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution, did the province regain its freedom and decide to join modern Romania. The union did not last. The newly formed Soviet Union took it back in 1940, and again in 1944.[9]

It is this Russian annexation that embittered the Romanians, and it is this province that became the battleground of the Orthodox Churches. The region is now mostly part of the Republic of Moldova, and it is a bone of bitter contention between Romania,

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Russia and, more lately, Ukraine.

The Romanian versus the Russian Patriarchate

Wallachia and Moldova united in 1859 and formed the core of modern Romania. The union was fully recognized only after the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. With the union, the modern Romanian nation was on an ascending path and the Orthodox Church followed suit. Shortly thereafter, the two churches united as well, but a rather difficult period in the relationship of Church and State followed. On the one hand, the church asked Constantinople to recognize it as autocephalous. This meant full independence and equality with other autocephalous Orthodox Churches. On the other hand, it struggled against losing its independence to the new secular government of the country (*Istoria Bisericii Române*, Vol. 2, pp. 499-509).

The establishment of the Romanian Patriarchate took many years, and went hand in hand with the organization of the modern Romanian state. By this time, many Romanians were being educated in the West, especially in France, and they brough back with them the French model of state organization. Education and the school system in particular reflected strong French influence. Modern administration was also introduced, and the state and church were separated. At the same time, the immense estates of the monasteries were taken over by the state. The Church itself elected one Primate, Metropolitan Nifon, as sole religious leader, and the unification of the Church was a *fait accompli* (*Romanian Orthodox Church*, p. 48).

The mother Orthodox Church in Constantinople was upset at these events, especially at the secularization of the monasteries' estates. At the time, some 20 percent of Romania's land belonged to monasteries and a good part of it was "dedicated" to holy Orthodox places outside Romania. This meant that the revenue was transferred tax-free to those places, representing a huge source of income for the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Consequently, relations between this Patriarchate and Romania remained strained for a long period of time. An exchange of letters followed by accusations, misgivings, and misunderstandings. It was only in 1885 that Constantinople recognized the autocephaly of the new Church and sent letters to this effect to all the other autocephalous churches under its jurisdiction (*Istoria Bisericii Române*, Vol. 2, pp. 503-505; *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, pp. 410-474).

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With the passing of time, the state-church relationship in Romania evolved gradually from cold to good and even cordial. The relation was regulated by a number of laws and rules which probably culminated with the law of 1893, which to a high degree is still in effect. According to it, the state provides for the maintenace of all churches and pays a good portion of the salaries of all clergy. But, in the process the Church became a junior partner of the state (*Istoria Bisericii Române*, Vol. 2, p. 531-536).

The Romanian Orthodox Church, nonetheless, entered an era of development and of identification with the true aspirations of the nation. For the Romanian people, it was a belated period of cultural and spiritual renaissance. New churches and beautiful cathedrals were erected; old ones were restored; new seminaries were established; a well-educated and well-organized clergy developed. After the reintegration of most of the Romanian lands into a nation-state in 1918, the church reorganized itself too, and in 1925 the first Patriarch was elected (*ibid*., pp. 601-607).

While the church in Romania flourished, the church in Bessarabia suffered and was subjected to the intense pressure of Russification. Andrei Popovici, a respected researcher who studied in the United States in the 1920's, summarized the situation:

> The most unfortunate element in Russian-Bessarabian relations was the fact that the religion of the Moldavians and the Russians was the same ... This gave the Russian Empire a most excellent opportunity for Russification (*The Political Status of Bessarabia*, p. 101).

The effects of the Russian occupation became obvious soon after the annexation. In disregard of Orthodox canons, Moscow set up a new eparchy in Chişinau, apointed a Russian bishop, and placed the church under its direct control. The Russian language was forced upon the local people, and great efforts were made to Russify the clergy. From among the 13 bishops and archbishops appointed by Moscow between 1813 and 1917, only one was of Romanian origin.[10] And while some of the bishops were more benign, others were very malicious toward the Romanians. This is also true with regard to the entire Russian administration of the province. Here is a statement by Count Vorontsev, a Russian dignitary who traveled to Bessarabia in 1820: "This is a barbarous region, where the people for no fault whatever are beaten, imprisoned, fined, and at times burnt to death..."

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In reply, Count Kisselev wrote from St. Petersburg: "Your account of conditions in Bessarabia is very sad. This situation is certainly due to the pernicious Governors and officials chosen among the refuse and dregs of Russia and Moldova."[11]

Old parishes were modified, and many Russian priests were brought in to replace Romanian priests who did not speak Russian. Some churches were closed down. Church records began to be kept only in Russian, and Romanian language books were destroyed or forbidden. Small wonder many Moldavians rejected the Russian administration, and some of them took refuge in Romania (*ibid.*, pp. 23-26).

During the early part of this century, with new nationalist ferment boiling all over Russia, the Romanians in Bessarabia were also ready to demand their rights. It was then that Archbishop Serafim, a mean individual and a former Russian Army colonel, wrote: "A great many Moldavians emigrated to Romania and remained there and even became Romanian citizens. They are our greatest enemies" (*The Political Status of Bessarabia*, p. 107).

At the time of the Russian annexation, the population of Bessarabia was 86 percent Romanian. In 1918, through a relentless policy of colonization, the province had only about a 60 percent Romanian majority. Nevertheless, in March 1918 the council of the province, made up of representatives of many nationalities, voted to unite it with Romania. Among the enthusiastic supporters of the union were many orthodox priests (*From Moldavia to Moldova – The Soviet-Romanian Territorial Dispute*, ch. 2).

Alexei Mateevici (or Alecu Mateescu in Romanian), a poetpriest, wrote a simple yet very beautiful poem called "Limbă Noastră," ("Our Language"), which was later characterized by a high prelate as a poem, a song, and a Romanian prayer all at the same time. A special mass was held in Chişinau in March 1918 and "Wake up, Romanians," a song composed in Transylvania that is now Romania's and Moldova's national anthem, was sung by everybody. The dream of reunification with Romania was at last fulfilled.[12]

During the inter-war period, the church in eastern Moldova developed under the Romanian Patriarchate. There were two metropolitan churches, in Chişinau and Cernăuţi respectively, and a new episcopate in Bălţi. Hundreds of churches were erected or rebuilt. Monastic life was reinvigorated, and two upgraded theological schools developed at Chişinau and Cernăuţi Universities.

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Minorities had their own churches, and the Romanian constitution defended their rights. Finally, Romania was developing as a European country, and the future appeared promising.

The Church under the USSR

The conflict between Communism and Fascism during this century put a brutal end to the Romanian European dream. Following the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, in June 1940 Moscow sent Romania an ultimatum, and in less than 48 hours the Red Army invaded Bessarabia and, for the first time in history, northern Bukovina. One year later, Romania joined Germany and attacked Russia to reclaim its land. In 1944 the Soviet Union reannexed the two provinces, and occupied all of Romania, changing its social and political character dramatically. The darkest era in Romanian history followed. And the impact of this 12th and last Russian invasion of Romanian lands will probably haunt Romanians for a long time to come.[13]

The church in the regions annexed by Moscow was virtually ravaged. The priests and hierarchs who did not manage to escape to Romania were arrested, deported, or murdered. Many churches were burned down or transformed into storehouses, stables, were given over to other uses, or left to decay. Gradually, from almost eleven hundred churches that previously existed in Bessarabia, only 193 were still somehow open in 1988. Interestingly, many of them were closed during the more favorable years of Nikita Khrushchev, when authorities also wanted to demolish the statue of Stephen the Great.[14]

Chişinau alone had over thirty churches in 1940. By the time Gorbachev introduced *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Chişinau had only four functioning churches. Also, from the 28 Orthodox convents existing in 1940, only the small Japca monastery for nuns survived. Yet, Moldova was considered an important eparchate and had an archbishop appointed by Moscow. Actually, although the smallest eparchate under the Russian Patriarchate, Moldova was the biggest financial contributor to Moscow's Orthodox treasury.[15]

The last Russian archbishop, Serapion Fadeev, led the Moldavian church between 1987 and 1989 and distinguished himself for his hatred of the local people. He would often speak of "the cursed Moldavians," and threaten to crush them all. Serapion was one of the ugliest church leaders one might encounter anywhere. He came to

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Chişinau with his own entourage, spent his day time roaming the republic to open new churches, and the night drinking and watching pornographic movies. Eventually, an embarrassed Russian Patriarchate had to reassign him. He was later exposed in 1992 by Moscow's Ostankino TV station for his immorality. At the time, he was Metropolitan of Tula.[16]

One of the worst legacies left by Serapion was that, when Gorbachev granted religious freedom to his subjects, he quickly opened hundreds of churches. He consecratred as priests, in ceremonies lasting sometimes only minutes, anyone who proved that he knew how to read, could recite a few prayers, and knew some Romanian. The catch was that he demanded huge amounts of money, up to years of full-time salaries, from all those who wanted to become priests. Among them were a previously convicted thief, former truck and tractor drivers, militia men, janitors, and the like. Hundreds of churches were reopened in this manner with hurriedly ordained priests. Aware of their lack of calling for the priesthood and of their inadequate education, these new priests have clung to the Russian Patriarchate and have become the greatest supporters of the new bishop.[17]

When the author visited Moldova for the first time in 1989, Serapion was still there to hand over the church to a newly appointed bishop named Vladimir Cantareanu. At the time, Vladimir was 37 years old, spoke poor Romanian, and was still taking correspondence courses in theology. He had previously been the secretary of the Russian Metropolitan of Cernăuţi, a prelate known for his anti-Romanian feelings.

Looking back, it appears that by 1987 the Russian Patriarchate already had a well-prepared script when it sent Bishop Serapion to Moldova. It was probably then that Moscow decided to produce a new bishop of Romanian ethnic origin. It was then that Moscow made Vladimir a monk for one and a half years and later ordained him bishop and dispatched him quickly to Chişinau. Those who know Bishop Vladimir well claim that he has both inferiority and guilt complexes, and that he is completely under the thumb of Russia's Patriarchate.

Vlad Cubreacov, a member of Moldova's Popular Front and a specialist in religious affairs working for the Republic's Department of Cults, had many meetings with Bishop Vladimir. He asked the bishop to instill some new, religious and Romanian life into the

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eparchate, but to no avail. He also asked him to start publishing again *Luminatorul* ("The Illuminator"), the old publication of the Romanian church, but the bishop answered that he did not have the necessary approval.[18]

Nevertheless, the orthodox people of Moldova joyfully embraced their new freedom of worship. The author met and spoke with many of these believers and was apalled by their simplicity and ignorance. After over forty years of terror, they acted hypnotized by anyone dressed as a priest who would show them a cross or an old icon of the Virgin Mary. They appeared to mistake the icon for God Almighty Himself. They would kneel down, cross themselves, kiss the icon and fall into a state of prostration. Seeing such scenes was like a vision from the Middle Ages, and one does not know which to blame, Communism, Russia, or the Orthodox Church itself.

By comparison, the Baptist Church recently built in Chişinau, which was also visited, offered a kind of revelation. The impressive complex of the church, the school, and the activity it conducted was comparable to any large American Baptist Church. And although it was led by a Russian pastor, it appeared more Romanian in expression than many newly opened "Romanian" Orthodox churches.

In spite of all these shortcomings, the majority of the Romanians in Moldova, who still make up 65 percent of the population of the Republic, returned openly to their ancestral church. An Orthodox Theological Seminary, visited in its early days, was also opened at Căpriana Monastery near Chişinau. In October 1989, the Seminary had 90 students enrolled in a two-year program. The monastery itself had been built by Steven the Great. It was closed by Khruschchev in 1962, transformed into a storage facility, and eventually left in ruin. At the time of the author's first visit (October 1988), it had been reopened, with one monk only, and was being restored.

Between October 1989 and December 1993, the author returned to Romania and Moldova five times, meeting many prominent leaders of the two countries and following events closely. In the beginning, it appeared that Moldova was on its way to rejoining Romania, but this was just an appearance. It became evident later that Moscow had no intention of losing its empire and that the Russian Patriarchate was being used as another means of influence and expansion. The struggle that is going on today in the Orthodox Church of eastern Moldova is only the latest stage in the Russian drive to subdue, neutralize, and bypass the Romanians.

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For Moldova 1991 was a crucial year. The parliament organized an international conference to denounce the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov pact. The same year, Moldova declared its independence. Concomitantly, an increasing number of people began to demand that the Moldavian church rejoin the Romanian Patriarchate. Things were slowly going back to normal, but Moscow had its own agenda. In order to force Moldova back into the post-Soviet fold, it created a conflict in 1991 with the Gagauz minority, and in 1992 it triggered the Trans-Dnestr war.[19] As this war progressed, Moscow's Patriarchate launched a separate battle to regain control of the church.

At the beginning, some Moldavians placed their hopes in the new bishop. However, Bishop Vladimir was Moscow's man from the start and allegedly he was also a KGB informer. The author met him briefly, but he did everything to avoid a meeting and refused a request for an interview. Later, he met with the leaders of the self-proclaimed Dnestr Republic and sided openly with the Russophone elements of Moldova. It should be stressed that this self-proclaimed Dnestr Republic is the only state entity in the entire former Soviet Union adhering strictly to Marxism and proclaiming loudly its goal of rebuilding the USSR. And now this republic also wants its own independent orthodox church.

The battle for the church has divided the inhabitants of Moldova. The majority have strong pro-Romanian feelings as expressed in many public rallies. But the harsh reality of the Trans-Dnestr war and the frightening outcome of the war in Gruzia beat them again into submission. The leadership of Moldova has also been divided between those who want closer relations with Romania and even reunion, and the opportunists whom Moscow has cultivated carefully over many years. In order to keep their positions as presidents, ministers, department heads, and above all their privileges, these people have opted for Moscow.

The Current Struggle

In the course 1991 the Orthodox Church of Moldova was polarized into two camps, and the Trans-Dnestr war radicalized the camps. Many thousands of people petitioned for the right to rejoin the Romanian Patriarchate, but many others and most of the local Russians and Ukrainians sided with Bishop Vladimir. The neo-communist leadership of the Republic also sided with Vladimir, claiming that they had an independent country and that they wanted

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an independent church as well.

The Romanian Orthodox Church reacted with tact and patience. In order to mitigate the conflict, it dispatched several prelates born in Bessarabia to Chişinau. Among them there was Metropolitan Antonie Plamadeala of Transylvania, a former refugee from this province. Nevertheless, Romanian good-will was met with official hostility.[20]

Meanwhile, a local group of priests and believers decided to reorganize on their own the old Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia, and to this effect they elected Bishop Petru Paduraru as its temporary head. The battle went into the open and became ugly. The authorities refused to deal with the new church, and in August 1992 Bishop Petru's residence was vandalized. He was forced out and fled to Chişinau. The investigation that followed dragged its feet. Other churches under his jurisdiction were also attacked, vandalized, and many of his priests were threatened, maltreated, and even beaten up.[21]

In October, the new Church asked the Moldavian authorities to grant it official recognition, but the government refused. In addition, the government evicted several churches who joined Bishop Petru, citing various administrative reasons for the eviction. As a result of this relentless pressure and persecution, only some 40 churches have remained with Bishop Petru, while Bishop Vladimir controls over 800 churches. However, many Romanian Orthodox churches were considering joining Bishop Petru, a situation which displeased Moscow. Fearing this trend, the Russian Patriarchate rushed to upgrade its church in Chişinau to the metropolitan level and granted it ... independence.[22]

In December 1992 Bishop Petru Paduraru, accompanied by Protopope Petru Buburuz, as well as other priests and a large group of leading citizens, went to Bucharest and asked to be received in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Among the Bessarabian intellectuals who came with the delegation were Minister of Culture Ion Ungureanu and the reknowned poet, Grigore Vieru. On December 20, 1992, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Patriarchate officially recognized the reactivation of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia.[23]

The new self-governing church was placed on a par with the other Romanian Metropolitan Churches of Muntenia, Moldova, Transylvania, Oltenia, and Banat. In accepting the new church,

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Patriarch Teoctist said: "we respect the beliefs and rights of all the Russians of Bessarabia, but the Bessarabian Romanians are also the sons of the mother church in Romania, and no one can deny them the right to return to their mother ... to the Holy altars of Alexander the Good and Steven the Great" (*ibid.*).

Bishop Vladimir, as well as Moldova's Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli and Moscow's Patriarch, protested against Romania's interference in the internal affairs of Moldova. Patriarch Teoctist of Romania answered them with brotherly letters. He sent particularly moving letters to Moldova's president and prime minister, reminding them that "we all belong to the same nation, and the same conscience vibrates in all of us ... ." And further, he argued that this was not an interference on his part, but rather "the very continuation of the jurisdiction of Moscow's Patriarchate in Moldova, which is an extension of canonic-religious occupation even after the political occupation has ceased."[24]

The most important part of this debate was probably the exchange of letters between Patriarch Akexei II of Russia and Patriarch Teoctist of Romania. In response to Patriarch Alexei's letters of protest, Patriarch Teoctist sent Moscow a polite but unmistakable letter. Written carefully and with a good choice of words, the rather long answer states essentially that a historical injustice had been repaired and that the entire incident is unfortunate. This is summarized from *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, July 1993 (pp. 3 and 6):

> Your Sanctity and beloved brother in Jesus Christ,
> We received your letter of 24 December 1992 regarding our blessing for the reactivation of Bessarabia's Metropolitan Church, which you called an interference in the internal affairs and rights of the church of Moldova. But in the conscience of the world, and especially in the conscience of Christians, a historical injustice and abuse cannot ever create a right ...

The letter takes a historic approach and underlines the injustices suffered by the Romanians at the hands of the USSR from the perspective of the Church. The response cites all the canon laws pertinent to the case. With regard to questioning the rights of Romania's Patriarchate over Bessarabia, knowing that this Patriarchate was set up after that province had already been annexed by the Soviets, Bucharest asked rhethorically: "Did the Russian Patriarchate

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have any jurisdiction over Bessarabia when this Patriarchate was founded in 1448?"

Furthermorer, the letter calls the Russian annexation of 1812 "an immoral and disloyal act toward the entire Orthodox Church." It also adds "When in disrespect of existing church arrangements, Moscow set up a new eparchate in the province, Moldova's Metropolitan Church had been in existence for over four centuries."

> The following paragraph is probably the harshest:
> The annexation of Bessarabia by the Tsarist Empire did not lead to the liberation of Moldova from under the Ottoman Empire as your sanctity claims. It only represented a change from the Turkish yoke to the Russian yoke, which was worse and more unforgiving. The Turks respected our traditions, our language, and our national character. They accepted our local princes and church leaders. But Russian imperialism, using foreign prelates and every other means, exercised an unending process of Russification over the Romanian majority of the province.

And further still...

> The priests and believers headed by Bishop Petru were subjected to a barbarous campaign of persecution because of their intention to reestablish the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia. Bishop Petru was forcefully evicted from his residence in Balti. He first appealed to you, but without any results. Only after that he came to us and then we gave him our blessing ....

The visit to Romania of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomeu I, and other attempts of international mediation did not solve the conflict (*Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, August 1993, p. 1). And the battle continues while the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate uses the same arguments used by Moscow since the Second World War, and which most likely were prepared in the think tanks of the old KGB.

One case in point is a letter accompanied by an 11-page memo sent by the abbot of Căpriana Monastery to Patriarch Teoctist of Romania. Apparently, the patriarch did not answer and the author went public. The memo starts with humility. It explains that a group of "true Romanian priests" from Bessarabia, but who no longer speak

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Romanian, ask permission to come by bus to Jassy to conduct a "true old-style religious service" at the Metropolitan church of Moldova.

The memo accuses Romania of having betrayed true Orthodoxy by adopting the Gregorian calendar and by flirting with the West and with the Catholic Church. It seems, nevertheless, that the memo was written in several stages. At one point it asks Romania to respect the old calendar, still used by the Bessarabian church, if it wants unification with Moldova. On a later page, however, apparently after the Romanian Patriarchate had agreed to let the new Bessarabian Church use the old calendar, the memo claims that if Romania wants unification, it should itself go back to the old calendar.

And further, recognizing that the Romanian Orthodox Church did send a great amount of help to Moldova, the memo claims that it was all a bait to get back the province and to change its true religious character. Finally, the memo claims that the authors representing the true orthodox religion of Bessarabia "have a great respect for the Patriarchate of Moscow, which has been, is, and will forever be, the sole and true bearer of orthodox faith in the entire world."[25] One does not have to be very knowlegeable to realize that the whole episode is yet another diversion.

According to the latest information, the new Romanian Church of Bessarabia continues to attract parishes and to build new churches. Blessing of the ground for a future church took place in August 1993 and among the over one thousand people who attended the ceremony was Mary Pendleton, the American ambassador to Chişinau. She spoke briefly about the need to respect human rights and freedom of religion (*Ţara*, 10 August 1993, p. 6).

Bishop Vladimir protested again on several occasions and even requested the intervention of the Ministry of the Interior of Moldova against alleged foreign interference. In addition, he announced that he would appoint his own bishop in Balti. Furthermore, the Dnestr Republic's government also requested a separate bishop in Tiraspol and suggested yet another bishop in the small Gagauz town of Komrat. Thus, the previous demand to federalize politically the small republic of Moldova has been expanded with the intention to federalize its church as well. Apparently, the more divided and more antagonized Moldova is, the better for Moscow.

Conclusion

It should be mentioned that when the Russians reached

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Romanian lands and annexed Bessarabia or eastern Moldova, their leaders knew very little about the local people. When they found out that the Romanians were neither Slavs to be annexed, nor Moslems to be driven out, some of them pondered the possibility of doing away with the Romanian state.

The very existence of the Romanian states stood in the way of the Russian drive to Constantinople, to the Adriatic Sea, and possibly to a pan-Slav state, streching from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Even Ukrainian encyclopedias published recently in the West stress that the existence of the Romanians "interrupted" the continuity of the Slavs.[26] From a Romanian point of view, this is not a joke. Vladimir Zhirinovsky has repeatedly stated the same thing, and his geo-political maps are trying to do away with Romania.

The Church has first and foremost a spiritual obligation toward its people – the salvation of souls. And this is very much an individual pursuit. To achieve this goal, the Church must instill a strong belief. The church also has the civic duty to educate and motivate its believers in order to create stable, civilized, and prosperous societies. This is a collective pursuit that works best through national churches that share the same language, culture, history, feelings, and a sense of belonging.

The vast majority of Romanians are Christian Orthodox. It is a fact, and history cannot be changed. In retrospect, however, many high-calibre Romanians wonder whether their church has really lived up to the expectations of the people. As a matter of record, several responsible Romanian historians pointed out in their works that choosing the Orthodox Church was almost fatal.[27] It was the second largest tragedy of the Romanian nation after its unhappy geographic location.

The Romanian Orthodox Church is trying hard to prove that it has stood by its people, but this has not always been the case. From the 11th to the beginning of the 18th century, the Orthodox Church kept the people in ignorance and promoted foreign languages and strange alphabets. The church failed to provide what western Churches did for their people: education, emancipation, a strong sense of belonging to Europe, a moral and spiritual authority to which one could look and which would fight for justice. That explains to a large extent the confusion and resignation reigning now among Romanians in eastern Moldova.

The Romanian Orthodox Church became fully national only

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The Romanian Orthodox Church became fully national only after Romanians discovered by themselves who they were and what they wanted. From this perspective, the decision of the Bucharest Patriarchate of December 1992 to take the Church of Bessarabia under its wing is indeed an act of remedial justice, but it is a very late act. Why did the Church keep quiet for decades? Where was the Orthodox Church when the much tried Romanian believers needed it?

Looking at the Russian Orthodox Church from a Romanian point of view, with few exceptions this church has been just another arm of expansionism. The Russian Orthodox Church also failed miserably to educate, to enlighten spiritually, and to help morally and materially the average Russian. This may explain the inadequate understanding Russians and their leaders show for other people and countries.

The religious battle going on now in Moldova is only the extension of the first Russian annexation of Bessarabia in 1812, of the 1940 Soviet invasion of Bessarabia and Bukovina, and of the 1992 Trans-Dnestr War. The battle continues.

Notes

1. Examples of Latin-root words are: *credinţa* 'faith', *Dumnezeu* 'God', *biserica* 'church', *altar* 'altar', *cruce* 'cross', *Duminica* 'Sunday'. As for archeological evidence, a fourth century Latin inscription, for instance, found in central Transylvania, reads: *Ego Zenovius Votum Posui* 'I, Zenobius, put this in token of gratitude'. General works used here and in the followig are Constantin C. Giurescu and Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiana* (Bucureşti, Editura Stiintifica, 1974) and Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria Românilor* (American-Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Oakland, CA: 1984).
2. *Romanian Orthodox Church*, The Bible and Orthodox Mission Institute (Bucharest, 1957), p. 8.
3. Examples of Slavonic words are *slujba* 'service', *duh* 'spirit', and *Vecernie* 'evening service'.
4. *Chronological History of Romania*, (ed.) Constantin C. Giurescu, (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română, 1974), pp. 60-65.
5. *Biserica Ortodoxă Română, Buletinul Oficial al Patriarhiei Române*, May-June 1985: 479-480.
6. *Istoria Bisericii Române*, 2 vols, Institutul Public şi de Misiune Ortodoxă (Bucureşti, 1958), Vol. I, pp. 171-189.
7. Aurel Popovici, *The Political Status of Bessarabia* (Washington: Ransdell Inc., 1931), pp. 43f.
8. See, among others, *Bukovina*, (ed) G. W. Prothero (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920).
9. For details see Nicholas Dima, *From Moldavia to Moldova – The Soviet-Romanian Territorial Dispute*, East European Monographs (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), especially chaps 2 and 3.
10. *Ţara*, 5 May 1992, p. 5.

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11. P. Cazacu, *The Truth about the Question of Bessarabia* (Bucharest, Cultura Nationala, 1926), p. 23.
12. *Comuniunea Românească*, October 1984, p. 5.
13. See Nicholas Dima, *Journey to Freedom* (Washington: Selous Foundation Press, 1990).
14. *Basarabia Desrobită* (Bucureşti: Marvan SAR, 1942); and personal interviews with Dan Besliu, victim of the attempt to demolish Steven the Great's statue, Riga, November 1989, and Protopope Petru Buburuz, April 1994.
15. Various personal interviews in Moldova in 1989.
16. *Ţara*, 1 December 1992, p. 6.
17. Personal interviews in Moldova.
18. Interviews with V. Cubreacov of Moldova's Department of Cults.
19. Nicholas Dima, "The Dnestr Republic: A New Geo-Political Game," in manuscript.
20. As recounted by Metropolitan Antonie at an international gathering in Sibiu, November 1993.
21. See *inter alia Ţara*, 8 December 1992, p. 8, and *Vestitorul*, 28 February 1993, p. 2.
22. Recent interview with Protopope Buburuz, *Tara*, 10 August 1993, p. 6.
23. *Credinţa*, No. 10-12, 1992, pp. 1 and 4.
24. *Tara*, 1 December 1992, p. 6, *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, August 1993, p. 3.
25. The author received a copy of this strange letter dated September 1993.
26. See for example *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (Toronto: The Ukrainian National Association / University of Toronto Press, 1963).
27. For a good discussion of this subject, see Iosif Ton, *Adevarată Credinţa*, Societatea Misionară Română (1988), especially ch. 4, "Mărturia Istoricilor Români."

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Marriage Prestations Among the Rajputs of the Kumaon Himalayas

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This paper will examine the changing patterns of marriage and marriage prestations among the Rajputs of the Himalayan region of Kumaon. Fieldwork on which this paper is partially based was conducted in PakhuRa,[1] a Kumaoni village in Uttar Pradesh, India, about eighty-five road miles west of Nepal, sixty-three road miles north of the Indian plains and about six trail miles northwest of Almora, the district capital. The high caste Ksatriya Rajputs are the numerically dominant *jati* in Kumaon (about fifty percent) and constituted about eighty per cent of PakhuRa in 1987. PakhuRa Rajputs, as nearly all of the Rajputs in rural Kumaon, formerly were known as Khas-Rajputs or Khasiya and probably had Sudra rank. But, as these are terms of derision and insult today, I will avoid using them henceforth. Further, these PakhuRa Rajputs, as well as the majority of Kumaoni Rajputs, are not to be confused with the few remaining higher-ranking Thuljat Rajputs in the region. The latter are descended largely from the plains and from the royal families of the ancient Kumaoni *rajas* (e.g., Chand, Katyuri, Mankoti, etc., see Sanwal: 1976 and Fanger 1980).

Although Rajputs make their living primarily by the cultivation of terraced fields, most households supplement their agricultural income with cash earned from employment outside the village. As we will see, this external employment is an important factor in the changing pattern of marriage prestations.

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[1] Initial fieldwork was conducted in 1966-67 under the auspices of a grant from the Fulbright Foundation and the United States Educational Foundation in India. Return visits to PakhuRa and Kumaon were made in December, 1981, January, 1982, and for five months in 1986-87. This research was partially funded by the Kutztown University of Pennsylvania Research Committee and the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. This paper is a revised and updated version of an article that was published in India in 1987 (see Fanger: 1987).

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Marriage Prestation in the Indian Context

The question of brideprice (or bridewealth) has long fascinated anthropologists; yet, until recently, most discussions of the topic have been confined to the continent of Africa (Tambiah 1989:413-435). Moreover, the considerable interest in brideprice has not nourished a parallel concern with dowry. While this lack of interest may reflect the relative infrequency of dowry in most non-western societies, this situation does not apply to India. Until Tambiah's seminal essay (1973:59-169), there had been very little theoretical attention focused on this subject for India. Hopefully, this article will help fill the gap, especially as it relates to the Kumaoni area.

Both brideprice and dowry involve the transmission of property at marriage. In the case of dowry, the kin of the bride provide her with property "... as a type of pre-mortem inheritance..." (Goody 1973:1). Technically, this property is under the wife's control, although her husband may have the right to manage it. According to Tambiah:

> A husband cannot transfer the dowry to his sister, partly because he requires his wife's consent, but more importantly because it is against the spirit of the dowry institution, which is that the dowry given a wife and in her legal possession should form part of the conjugal estate, to be enjoyed by husband and wife and to be transmitted in time to their children (1973:621).[2]

Brideprice, by contrast, is a transaction in which property passes from the kin of the groom to the kin of the bride. I want to emphasize the kin of the bride rather than the bride herself. Brideprice can be distinguished from what Goody has called "indirect dowry" by which he means "... marriage prestations [that] are made by the groom or his kin ... [in which] the ultimate recipient of these gifts is the bride and not her kin" (1973:2). While I find Goody's distinction between "indirect dowry" and bridewealth useful, I consider his phrase, "indirect dowry", to be inappropriate. As the wealth and gifts are given by the groom's family, the term dowry is inconsistent; Barbara Miller (personal communication, 1980)

[2] Tambiah is expressing here the ideal principles of dowry; in practice, a husband or his family may be able to appropriate a wife's dowry for use by other family members (e.g., the husband's sister or niece). However, this usually would be done secretly and is a violation of the principle of the institution.

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suggested to me the phrase "diverted bridewealth". I prefer this, as it reflects more accurately the direction of these prestations. This distinction is particularly relevant to marriage transactions in India, and, as we shall see, for Kumaon. While many ethnographers of marriage payments in India have described prestations from the groom's side to the bride's side,[3] these gifts often end up as "diverted bridewealth" rather than brideprice. According to Tambiah, because brideprice payments in India are considered degrading and immoral, they are "... under pressure to be converted back into dowry..." (1973:71). It is apparent from Tambiah's analysis of marriage exchanges in India that prestations from the groom's side often consist of jewelry and clothes for the bride. When cash is given by the groom's family, the bride's family usually is expected to use it to purchase jewelry for the bride. While such prestations may be reported or interpreted in the literature as brideprice, they appear to be more akin to our concept of "diverted bridewealth."

Many anthropologists would agree with Karve's observation that "...all over India there is the custom of giving brideprice among the poorer castes and of receiving dowry among the higher castes" (1965:-132). Indeed, Miller (1978:218-224) reports that, while brideprice is relatively widespread among unpropertied groups throughout India, dowry is prevalent in north India, especially among upper class groups. However, Miller also found that reciprocity (relatively balanced prestations in both directions) characterizes marriages among many propertied groups in central and south India and that there are exceptions to all of these reported patterns. My interpretation of Miller's examples is that many of the "reciprocity" and "brideprice" exceptions among the higher castes may be understood as "diverted bridewealth", since most of the groom's prestations end up as gifts to the bride. Nonetheless, there are examples of brideprice (as defined here) among higher castes (e.g., Madan 1965:114-118; Sanwal 1966; Sax 1990:104-115) and landowning peasant castes (e,g., Burkhart 1969;220), as well as dowry among lower castes. The latter is becoming increasingly widespread as many low caste *jatis* have been giving up their distinctively inferior caste customs for the more prestigious ways of higher castes (e.g., Cohn 1955:75).

Some authors have emphasized the view that brideprice and

[3] See Miller for a compilation of several dozen examples of this pattern (1978:227-244, 1981).

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dowry are conceptually opposite and that they function differently in different social systems. Nur Yalman illustrates this point of view as it relates to marriage and kin in Ceylon and south India: "... dowry stands in radical contrast to bridewealth... the differences between the kinship systems that utilize one or the other type of payment are fundamental ...' (1967:303). However, as we have seen, throughout India, there are communities which practice both brideprice (or diverted bridewealth) and dowry, or *jatis*, which are changing from brideprice to dowry. This seems to indicate that the distinctions between the two do not reflect radical differences in the marriage systems associated with them. Perhaps it would be more helpful to view brideprice and dowry as variant emphases on a pattern of marriage exchanges and to ask what variables may be associated with one emphasis or the other. I will now address this question for the region of Kumaon.

Marriage Prestations in Kumaon

In the Kumaon Himalayas, the highest ranking Thul-jat Brahman and Rajput castes always have practiced orthodox dowry marriages, while the majority of the Rajputs traditionally practiced marriage by brideprice. However, in the last fifty to seventy-five years, there has been a gradual shift among the Rajputs towards the orthodox dowry marriages. In the most acculturated areas, especially in villages where large numbers of Rajput males work in service, the dowry has become more of a cultural expectation than an exception. Nevertheless, brideprice still may be required secretly in these dowry marriages and then used as a diverted bridewealth. Conversely, in the early twentieth century when brideprice marriages were still supreme, token dowries also were given (Joshi 1929: Chapter 3). Clearly, we are not dealing with two polar types of marriage systems, for within the same *jati*-cluster, both dowry and brideprice have been operating together for at least seventy-five years. What I will be presenting, then, is not a movement from one polarity to another, but rather I will focus on the shift in emphasis from brideprice to emphasis on dowry.

It is clear from a broad range of historical materials (discussed below) that prior to the twentieth century, the marriage customs of the Thul-jat Rajputs and Brahmans on the one hand, and of the Rajputs on the other, were quite different. The Thul-jats, even after settling in the hills, continued to maintain standards of orthodoxy practiced earlier while living in the plains. Thus, they placed great

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emphasis on marriages involving the Sanskritic ritual of *kanyadan* (i.e., gift of virgin daughter) and dowry. Such marriages always were performed by Brahman priests according to the rules of Hindu orthodoxy. Presumably, all marriages involving Thul-jat females conformed to these standards; any exceptions resulted in nothing less than expulsion from caste. The Thuljats did not allow any remarriage of widows or divorced women. Thul-jat Rajput males, however, could take Rajput women as concubines or secondary wives. Presumably, these "marriages" were done according to Rajput customs. I might point out here that what was marriage for the Rajput may have been merely the acquisition of a concubine for the Thul-jat.

Rajput marriage, on the other hand, required no standardized ceremonial performance to render a union legitimate. Ceremonies, often (but not always) were performed in the first marriage of a woman, and might be conducted by a Brahman priest. The latter ceremonies usually were an abbreviated portion of one of the sections of the orthodox pattern, but never the section involving *kanya-dan*. The ceremonies mentioned most frequent by older informants were the *amcal, saptapadi* and Ganes *puja*, all of which are sections of the orthodox marriage. Some informants said all they did was hold a *jagar* (spirit possession séance) so that the household deity could bless the bride. All of these ceremonies could be performed (and often were) after the bride entered the groom's village. These ceremonies did not, in themselves, contribute to the jural completion of the marriage, nor to the legitimization of the offspring. Indeed, I would agree with Sanwal that the "primary purpose of these religious ceremonies ... is to reaffirm their claim to be 'good Rajputs'" (1966:50).

Traditionally, there were two necessary conditions for the completion of a legitimate Rajput marriage. The guardians of the bride must be paid a brideprice (*dam*) and the bride must be taken to the residence of the groom. Feasting and ceremony probably were common (although not required) in the first marriage of the bride, but not in case of her remarriage.

The payment of the brideprice seemed to take on the nature of a commercial transaction. Sanwal reports that traditional Rajput marriage:

> is that union (it need not be marked by any religious ceremonial) between a man and a woman of the recognized socio-ritual categories, which has been created by a formal transfer of power

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> over the woman from her legal guardian to another man in consideration of a "price" paid on behalf of the latter by his guardian ... to the woman's guardian (1966:50).

In 1929 Joshi, a keen observer of Kumaoni social organization, remarked that among the Khasa (i.e., Rajputs), "A woman is a chattel, who is purchased for one of the sons by the father of the family. The nature of the transaction is more the acquisition of a valuable article for the family than a contractual relationship between a man and a woman" (1929:108). Prior to British rule (from 1815), a husband acquired almost complete control over his wife and her offspring. Indeed, a husband or his heirs had the right to sell her and her children into slavery. During the period of Gurkha rule over Kumaon (1790-1815), a tax was levied on the sale of wives and widows, and a duty was placed on their export (Joshi 1929:110; Walton 1911:132-133). This right to sell a wife, a widow, or her children eventually ceased under the British, but the custom was not completely eliminated. Berremen has reported this kind of "traffic in women" in the nearby district of Garhwal, among the culturally similar Garhwali Rajputs (1963:74-75), and in the 1960s I found this practice still occurring in a village near Pakhura.[4]

The nature of marriage negotiations involving a brideprice or a dowry with a diverted bridewealth has all the signs of a commercial exchange. The price is not fixed and depends on whatever the traffic will bear. Considerable haggling is expected, especially if questions of gifts and food exchanges are involved. There usually are three negotiators from each side, and local tradition holds that, when five of six negotiators agree on a point, a decision is made. This enables the leader of each delegation to compromise on an issue without actually giving in himself.

Perhaps most important in our judgment of brideprice as a commercial affair is the fact that the Rajputs themselves see brideprice marriages in terms of a sale. To illustrate this perspective, I give the following paraphrase of a quotation from a fairly well-off middle-aged Rajput. I regard these comments as generally typical.

> Of my three wives (not simultaneously) all were *purchased*; but, in the marriages of my six children, there was only *kanya-dan*,

[4] See also Hasan (1971: Chs 10, 11).

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> *charity* of daughter. If I took money, it would mean I was selling my daughter. We do not do this anymore.

While the veracity of this statement is unsubstantiated, the important point is that the speaker regards the paying of brideprice as amounting to a sale and he regards such sales as immoral, although he implies that his wives were acquired precisely this way.

Another important dimension of traditional Rajput marriage by brideprice is that the transaction was not irrevocable. A woman could return to her home or marry another man. The original husband might protest, but he had no recourse provided his brideprice was returned. If a woman ran off with another man, the union was not legitimate until the first husband had been reimbursed for the brideprice.

In cases where the husband died, the usual expectation was that a young widow would marry her husband's younger brother. Informants acknowledged that the primary purpose of this was to save the cost of another brideprice. Both the widow and the younger brother had the right to reject the union. However, if she returned to her natal home or married someone outside her husband's lineage, her husband's heirs had the right to demand the return of the brideprice.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been a significant trend toward the adoption of orthodox Hindu marriages based upon the ceremony of *kanya-dan* and the giving of a dowry. The decision to have this kind of marriage usually also means the sponsoring of a rather expensive orthodox ceremony and the providing of a feast for the groom's marriage party (*barat*) and village kin. According to orthodox ideology, when one does *kanya-dan* one must not accept any money;[5] however, in the past, this rule frequently was broken surreptitiously. In the traditional non-Sanskritic marriage, a feast was not expected, although sometimes the marriage party brought its own food or, perhaps, paid an extra portion for its share of a feast. But, with dowry marriages, a feast is considered obligatory, and the cost is supposed to be borne entirely by the bride's family. However, money or grain may be given to provide the

[5] According to the classical *Code of Manu*: "No father who knows (the law) must take even the smallest gratuity for his daughter; for a man who, through avarice, takes a gratuity is a seller of his offspring" (as quoted in Tambiah 1973:68).

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cost of the marriage party's portion of the feast. Informants who admit to this practice insist that such a payment is not a brideprice, as they do not keep any of the money for themselves. However, others insisted that it was wrong to take anything and that to do so was to destroy the purity of the *kanyan-dan*. In 1967, some informants said that "a few unscrupulous people" still took a large brideprice and performed *kanya-dan* anyway. However, by 1987, such diverted bridewealth-*kanya-dan* marriages were becoming increasingly rare, particularly in the first marriage of a daughter. Only poor Rajput families would accept grain or cash payments in their daughter's dowry marriage, and such unions are not easy for the researcher to find. If a poor Rajput could not afford a dowry marriage for his daughter, he would now look toward his *biradri* (patrilineage) for assistance.

All of the discussion so far has been in regard to the first marriage of Rajput females. Rajputs know very well that divorce, levirate, and widow remarriage are frowned upon by orthodox Hinduism, yet they recognize the legitimacy of all these practices. A widow is greatly praised if she stays in her husband's village without remarrying, but she is not expected to do so. While *kanya-dan* marriages probably are more stable than marriages based on brideprice,[6] the former occasionally do break up, and women, who once were given in marriage, may then remarry. The second marriage of a woman, whether widowed or divorced does not matter, is never performed with a dowry or Brahmanical ceremony, and a brideprice usually is paid either to the former husband, his heirs, or to the woman's father.[7] Although such marriages suffer some stigma and the women so married (called *nolis* or *dhantis*) bear some ritual and commensual

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[6] Sanwal found that "it is generally agreed that three decades or so back, the number of marriages which ended in divorce amongst the rural Khasi (Khas-Rajput) had increased alarmingly and that "at the present time divorces are... becoming less common" (1966:56). It is my interpretation that when marriage is conducted by *kanya-dan*, participants are making a public commitment to the "great tradition" values of a permanent marriage. A woman who is given in *kanya-dan* may be returned to her natal home without embarrassing her family. However, there is no such embarrassment associated with brideprice marriages as the family is not making any pretentions. Admittedly, in such cases, the woman's parents or a future husband is expected to return the brideprice.

[7] By 1982, some informants said this might be waived because a father is embarrassed to take money for a daughter whom he already has given in *kanya-dan*. Also, a husband or his heirs may not claim compensation for a woman who was given to them rather than purchased.

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restrictions, there is no question that these are valid, legitimate unions.

How, then, do we explain this shift in emphasis from brideprice to dowry marriages? My first reaction was to view the data in terms of Srinivas's caste mobility model of Sanskritization.[8] The village of study is only six trail miles from Almora, the district capital and is situated in an area of relatively high concentration of immigrant Rajput and Brahman *jatis*. Local Rajputs have been long exposed to models of Sanskritic Hinduism, and they are well aware of the gaps existing between their behavior and what is expected of Thul-jat Rajputs. This seemed to be an ideal environment for Sanskritization. Furthermore, over the past few decades large numbers of Rajput villagers either have joined the military service or have gone to the plains or other hill towns in search of employment. Inevitably, these external contacts have sensitized further the Rajput population to the marginal nature of their form of Hinduism, while increasing their feelings of inferiority versus the orthodox standards practiced in the plains. Although aspirations to identify with plains Rajput standards are certainly a factor, Sanskritization is an insufficient explanation for the trend towards dowry marriages. First of all, the Khasa long ago had achieved Rajput status.[9] This is clear from the fact that they are generally acknowledged to be Rajputs rather than Khasa or Sudra. Thus, the local Rajputs are not attempting to claim a position or title to which they are not freely acknowledged to be entitled. Secondly, the trend toward Sanskritic Hinduism is not occurring on a *jati* or even on a village-wide base, rather it appears to be an individual choice. There is no corporate *jati* action involved here. Third, those who take to Sanskritic marriage rituals do not necessarily follow Sanskritic values in other religious contexts. For example, two weeks after a *kanya-dan* dowry marriage, a Rajput family held an unorthodox spirit possession séance (*jagar*) to bless the new bride (see Fanger 1990). In another case, a man, who married his daughter with a

[8] "Sanskritization is the process by which a 'low' Hindu caste ... changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high ... caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community" (Srinivas 1966:6).

[9] Sanwal (1976:43-44) reports that the Khasa were elevated from Sudra to Rajput status during the reign of the Chand *rajas* (which ended in 1790). Pauw (1896:12) and Berreman (1963:130) indicate that the Rajputs of Garhwal were without the sacred thread (a traditional high caste ritual marker) until the twentieth century.

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substantial dowry, bought a second wife for his son when the latter had no children from his first wife.

Thus, while the Rajput's increasing exposure and sensitivity to orthodox values is a likely factor in the observed trend, by itself it is an insufficient cause of change and only can provide a partial explanation. I would suggest that a significant additional factor is to be found in the economic forces that surround the widespread employment migration outside the village that I mentioned in the introduction. This seems to be a likely path to pursue when we take into account the enormous economic implications in the shift from a brideprice to a dowry marriage. Whereas the typical brideprice may cost the groom's family over one thousand rupees, a dowry marriage often will cost the bride's family several thousand rupees.

The population of the village has expanded rapidly in the past few decades[10] so that the size of most land holdings is barely sufficient to meet the peasant's normal consumption needs. Largely due to this economic pressure, village men have taken to the military and other forms of service in large numbers. In 1967, some sixty-one percent of the Rajput village households studied had a total of seventy men involved in fulltime outside employment. By 1982, employment migration had expanded to the point where eighty-five of the ninety-three Rajput households surveyed (ninety-one percent) had at least one man employed in the external cash economy. A total of 105 men were employed outside the village as opposed to forty-one who worked in the village as farmers. The few families that had no men in service were headed mostly by widows with no adult sons, or elderly men who had retired from service. Moreover, of the forty-one village farmers in 1982, many received cash income locally on a seasonal or daily wage basis. While comparable statistical data on these points were not collected in 1986-87, it was very clear that this pattern of employment migration and increased participation in the cash economy had continued unabated. Thus, although village land holdings are insufficient to meet the subsistence needs of most peasant households, villagers have been very successful in gaining supplementary income through employment migration.[11]

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[10] Whereas the official 1961 Almora district census reported 491 people in PakhuRa, my village census recorded 617 people in 1967 and 839 people in 1987.

[11] This employment migration has taken them throughout the plains of northern India, mostly to the large urban centers or into the Indian military and police services.

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There are two direct consequences relevant to this study from these economic developments. First, the simultaneous reduction in land holdings per family and increase in population have minimized considerably the heavy burdens of women and, at the same time, reduced their importance in the village economy. Kumaoni women have been long famous in Uttar Pradesh for the incredible amount of work that they perform in the Himalayan domestic economy. They do almost all of the agricultural work except the plowing, and gather huge loads of pine needles, oak leaves, grass and green branches for the cattle's shed and fodder. In addition, they do the usual household chores of cleaning, tending the cattle, cooking and so forth. Their importance and high value clearly were reflected in the brideprice form of marriage. Today, they continue to perform all of these tasks; however, the amount of work done per female has been reduced considerably due to the decrease in the size of the average land holding. There are more women to work less land and, thus, their economic value has been reduced proportionately. This observation is consistent with the findings of Boserup who noted that, when the major part of agricultural work is done by women, there often is a higher incidence of brideprice; but, where women do less agricultural work than men, dowry is more prevalent (1970:50).

The second point is that, although the agricultural economic base has been reduced in its relative importance to each household's production, it also has been more than offset by the wages earned by men in service. Indeed, many families appear to be financially better off today than they were just a generation ago. During my stay in 1986-87, I was struck by a considerable improvement in village prosperity. Many new houses had been erected and older houses had been expanded and improved, new *pakka* (cement) irrigation canals had been constructed and a large irrigation scheme recently had been completed. A new village temple and a new water source had been constructed and people had many more household and personal possessions. The number of students in school was greatly increased, and students were achieving much higher grade levels of education. Whereas in 1967 only four students had reached the ninth grade, in 1987 this achievement was commonplace, and one student had just completed his M.A. All of these changes inevitably have effected marriage and marriage prestations. While in the past a man hardly could afford not to "sell" his daughter in marriage, today he is ashamed to do so. Indeed, with his new-found financial security, he

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is motivated to express his wealth in an idiom that not only manifests his material success, but also increases his prestige and asserts his identity as a good Rajput. Dowry feasts are an ideal form of conspicuous consumption. In one stroke, today the Rajput who performs *kanya-dan* marriage establishes his reputation as a good, religious man and a wealthy generous person.

Summary

Up to the nineteenth century traditional Rajput marriages in Kumaon were largely brideprice arrangements with little attention paid to Brahmanical rituals. Sometime around the beginning of the twentieth century, Rajputs began to adopt dowry marriages, while often continuing to accept brideprice. Gradually, the brideprice was converted to a "diverted bridewealth" for the bride's family used the brideprice to pay for the dowry and the wedding feast. Within the last generation, the brideprice has become a rarity, except among poorer Rajputs or in the remarriage of widows and divorced women. Simultaneously, dowry and *kanya-dan* have become a fairly standardized custom in the first marriage of a woman. Indeed, the practice now is normative in the village of study.

Three possible factors help explain this process of change. First, we explored whether the movement toward dowry was part of a broader Sanskritization-like social mobility movement. Although the Rajputs of today were formerly classified as Khasa and Sudra, there is little evidence of a *jati*-wide social mobility movement. In fact, they long ago successfully achieved their current Rajput status and rank. Nevertheless, opportunities to observe orthodox role models of Rajput and Hindu behavior have dramatically increased in the twentieth century and undoubtedly constitute an important consideration in the change of marriage customs.

Secondly, it was observed that the expanding population and decreasing size of per capita land holdings have conspired to reduce significantly the agricultural labor of women. Simultaneously, because male employment migration has increased, the relative importance of agricultural labor in the village economy has declined as well. Usage of the brideprice form of marriage was indicative of the enormous importance of women in the traditional economy, whereas the emergence of dowry suggests her decreased role in the expanding cash economy of employment migration.

Finally, we noted that the Rajput's increasing participation in the

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cash economy through employment migration brought considerable improvement in village prosperity. Although Rajputs are not trying to change their position in the caste hierarchy, they do aspire to recognition as good, proper Rajputs. With their new success and increased awareness of plains Rajput behavior, they now can better afford many of the ceremonies and customs befitting a Rajput's position in society. Accordingly, dowry and *kanya-dan* have become important means to express their new prosperity as well as their traditional Rajput identity.

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The Social Semantics of Cardinal Directions in Medieval Scandinavia

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The cardinal directions, whose distinction "seems to be a universal characteristic of cultural knowledge systems" (Pinxten *et al.* 1983: 208), point to the most distant parts of the cosmos and therefore define the limits of the cosmos as known to humans. Taken together they order the cosmos into four quarters, a system that is widely known in cosmologies from throughout the world (Wheatley 1971; paradigmatic treatment from the point of view of the history of religions in Eliade 1959: 42-47). This system functioned apparently in the Indo-European world as well. Its best-known occurrence is doubtless the Roman *mundus*, a pit encircled by a trench cut into quarters (Deubner 1933). The division of ancient Ireland into four quarters, Rees and Rees argued (1961: 131-32), reflects an Indo-European pattern. Within Indic tradition, Bruce Lincoln points out homologies between ears and the cardinal points in cosmology and between the flanks of a sacrificial animal and the cardinal points in ritual (Lincoln 1986: 3, 32-35, 56-59). He seems inclined to the view that these particular homologies represent Indo-Iranian speculative extensions of what may have obtained in some proto-Indo-European predecessor. In the medieval Scandinavian records, which form the subject of this essay, and in which Iceland of necessity plays the major role as the greatest repository of vernacular writings, concern with the cardinal directions seems closely wrapped up with concerns both of daily life and of mythological speculation.

The extent to which a "compass rose" system was ingrained may be seen in the constructions of actual and symbolic space in Viking and medieval Scandinavia. The most obvious example is the division of the *terra nova* of Iceland, settled in the period 870-930, into four quarters, each designated with a cardinal direction, even though the actual alignment is far from perfect; in point of fact, it involves a clockwise shift to the east of exactly the sort postulated by scholars for northern Europe in general. Indeed, virtually all the scholarly debate on the older Scandinavian cardinal points has been concerned

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with the question of this general shift, which historians and philologists have putatively identified in the use of these directions. Mentioned as early as by Rasmus Rask and taken up again by N. M. Petersen in 1834, the shift received its fullest modern scholarly treatment in an essay by Lauritz Weibull published in 1928. Weibull thought that the ancient Scandinavians held north to be in the place where the sun rose, the etymological east, northeast by our reckoning. Subsequent discussion has mostly accepted a shift to the east and has debated its extent; Kemp Malone (1930), for example, argued that King Alfred used a shift of 45 degrees to the east in the geography of his adaptation of the world history of Orosius, and Rudolf Ekblom (1938; 1941) made it 60 degrees. The most recent treatment is that of the anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup (1985: 57-69), who seems cautiously to accept the shift. She is silent on the testimony of such skeptics as Natanael Beckman (1938) and Alvar Ellegård (1954-55), who doubted the existence of any shift. Most interesting, however, is her treatment of the relationship of space and time, which coalesce, she argues, in a unique medieval Icelandic world view based always on human observation: "Measuring the world in Iceland was a matter of collating temporal, spatial, and social realities" (Hastrup 1985: 69). A corollary of this insight is that the various measuring points themselves must be semantically meaningful, that is, are entities capable of bearing cultural meaning, as I shall argue below.

That learned Icelandic historians held the division into quarters to be important and fundamental to their understanding of the founding of their nation is demonstrated by the devoting to it by Ari Þorgilsson the learned of an entire chapter of his *Íslendingabók* ("Book of Icelanders"), a brief synoptic history of the Icelandic people from the discovery of Iceland down to the early twelfth century. The title of this chapter, according to the list of contents at the head of the text, is *Frá fjórðungadeild* ("Concerning the division into quarters"), and this is apparently the only chapter title in *Íslendingabók* not directly based on the opening words of the chapter itself, although appropriate language is found in the middle of the chapter (Jakob Benediktsson 1968: 4n8). Similarly, when the author(s) of *Landnámabók* ("Book of settlements," an account of the settling of Iceland) set out to enumerate the leading settlers of Iceland at the end of the book, they arranged the list by the four quarters: south, east, north, west. And when a fourteenth-century Icelandic geographer listed the fjords of his country, he too arranged his list by the

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quarters ("Fjarðatal," in Kålund 1908-18, vol. 3: 4-5; also in Mel'nikova 1986: 161). The Icelanders did not presumably create this division out of nothing. According to Ari's *Íslendingabók*, they got their first law from one Úlfljótr, who fetched it from Norway during the first part of the tenth century, probably from the Gulaþing legal area of western Norway – precisely the area of Norway whence many Icelanders had emigrated and with which Icelanders had continued contact. According to the Gulaþing law, as it was recorded in the later Middle Ages, the large districts of western Norway (*fylker*) were divided into quarters, each with a relatively full administrative apparatus. There may be reason to believe that the quarter system is as old as the *fylke* system (Indrebø 1935, Bauge 1959).

A similar tendency toward division into quarters was found in east Scandinavia (cf. Hafström 1959). It is especially seen in the general provisions of the medieval Scandinavian laws dividing districts and towns into quarters but is presumably older. If this represents an Indo-European or Germanic inheritance, then the famous division of Uppland, the realm of the Svear (Swedes), into the three *folkland* Tiundaland, Attundaland, and Fjädrundaland would presumably represent a Swedish innovation. Since, however, it appears that Uppland consisted of the three *folkland* and the common mustering district Roden, perhaps we are justified after all in grouping the Svear among those who divided their lands into four parts, even though the compass rose system is not used.

Like much else in the actual application of the cardinal directions, the quarters of Iceland are skewed, as mentioned above, when compared with map and compass. Stefán Einarsson (1944) has described linguistic aspects of this skewing with respect to the cardinal directions generally in Old Icelandic, and he and Einar Haugen have discussed it in modern Icelandic (Einarsson 1942; Haugen 1957), as have Wiley and Margolin in Faroese (1981: 13-45). It depends, to use Haugen's terms, on a distinction between *proximate* and *ultimate* orientation; the former was likely to be "correct," since it was based on local celestial observations; and the latter was likely to be "incorrect" (skewed), since it was based on "social practices developed in land travel" (Haugen 1957: 452). Hastrup devotes a chapter to the conceptual implications of this and related phenomena.

That perfection was indeed possible, however, is indicated by the symmetry of the fortresses of the Trelleborg type in late Viking Age Denmark. Here, where the spaces were small and the actual topogra-

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phy was not an issue, Scandinavian builders marked off space with an unwavering orientation to the cardinal directions, with fours doors aligned precisely on the cardinal points and internal roads describing north-south and east-west axes. Scholars have associated these forts with religion (Cohen 1965 with Thor, Höfler 1948 with Odin); others have simply explored foreign models (Nørlund 1948, Olsen 1977: 86-95), and it has even been suggested that they were a Danish invention (Foote and Wilson 1970: 267-72). Whatever the use of these sites, however (for recent general treatment, see Roesdahl 1987), and whatever their foreign antecedents, if any, their testimony is relatively clear on the importance of the marking off of space into quarters by means of the cardinal directions.

Three centuries later in Iceland, plans of the city of Jerusalem were sketched using precisely this format: a circular space cut into quarters by roads represented by a vertical axis crossing a horizontal axis (texts and photographs in Simek 1990: 513-17). Rudolf Simek identifies as a possible conduit for all three Icelandic versions of this plan (eleven others are known from Europe) the *Liber Floridus* of Lambert of St. Omer, an illustrated encyclopedic work from ca. 1120 (Simek 1990: 391). Interestingly, the two plans from European manuscripts illustrated in Simek's discussions of the plans in general (Simek 1990: 315; illustrations on pp. 301-02) do not show two crossing axes: the horizontal axis is intact, whereas the vertical axis ends at or just after the midpoint. To continue "up" the plan, one must jog left to a road about halfway along the horizontal radius. Although this road too is present on the Icelandic plans, thereby destroying the otherwise complete symmetry, it appears in all three cases to be more narrow than the continuation of the horizontal axis which is lacking on the European versions. This variation suggests a special attraction for Icelanders of a division of space into quarters, by axes.

A similar attraction to the four axes may be glimpsed in the Icelandic manuscript labyrinths, which are "unique in their combination of 7 paths and a cross of 4 axes" (Simek 1993: 339). In this case, the Icelanders reduced the number of paths from eleven to seven but kept the axial structure intact. Finally, in considering this learned manuscript tradition, we may compare the small *mappae mundi* illustrated and discussed in Simek (1990: 508-510), which add to the usual concentric circles of such maps the four cardinal directions at the peripheries.

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The plans of Jerusalem "...gehen nicht in erster Linie auf persönliche Anschauungen zurück, sondern auf traditionelle Vorstellungen von der Stadt im Zentrum der bewohnten Welt" (Simek 1990: 314). Similarly freed from the constraints of actual topography, the thirteenth-century Icelandic mythographer Snorri Sturluson created a mythic space, namely the cosmos of his forefathers, with a similar directional orientation. The eddic poems Vafþrúðnismál 21 and Grímnismál 41 agree that the heaven was formed from the skull or brain of the primeval giant Ymir, but Snorri adds the detail that four dwarfs hold it aloft, one at each corner; and these dwarfs bear the directional names Austri, Vestri, Norðri, and Suðri. Here again there is much debate concerning possible antecedents; although we are clearly dealing with some form of mythological speculation (de Boor 1924: 549), most probably Snorri's, both Indo-European and medieval Christian sources can be made to appear plausible (de Vries 1956-57: vol. 1, 255; Holtsmark 1964: 33-34; Lorenz 1984: 164-65), and although these dwarfs are listed in the catalog of dwarfs in *Völuspá*, only Austri seems to have enjoyed anything like an independent existence in skaldic poetry.

Snorri left us similar testimony concerning the four cardinal directions in another passage in *Gylfaginning*. After the slaying of Baldr, Loki flees to a mountain and constructs a house with four doors, so that he may see in all directions[1] (Finnur Jónsson 1931: 68); this incident is unknown outside of Snorri. Even if Snorri's evidence is not traditional in either case, however, we see actual space marked off directionally in the Trelleborgs of the Viking Age and mythic space marked off in the same way in this thirteenth-century Icelandic author's writing. To the latter we might add the stipulations for *hólmganga* in ch. 10 of *Kormáks saga*, which state that the cloak on which the duel is to be held shall be attached to the ground by four *tjösnur* at the corners. Even though the meaning of the word, which is *hapax legomenon*, remains unknown, the directional orientation seems implicit. The burden of all this evidence, then, is that it takes the four directions to complete a space, be it cosmos or constructed space. Here we might pause briefly to note that the word of direction *ætt* is either a homonym for or etymologically related to the ordinal for "eight." Be that as it may the directional term with the verb *eiga* "to possess" (1962: s. v.), the testimony of the texts and sites is clear: the number of directions is four.

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With the interior roads meeting diagonally in the center, the sites of the Trelleborg type suggest an assignment of the cardinal directions to two axes, north-south and east-west,[2] and there is ample evidence for a conception of the alignment of space along these axes. The most obvious may be the placename Norway, *norðr vegr*, the northern way, so named for travel along its west coast. That such travel was conceptually along a north-south axis, wherever the prow of the ship might at any moment happen to be pointed, is evident from the statement of Ohtere to King Alfred: "Nobody, he said, lived further north than he did. There is a port in the south called Sciringes heal" (quoted from Foote and Wilson 1970: 224). The compass directions NW, NE, SW, SE suggest deviations from this axis: *landnorðr*, *útsuðr*, etc. Such usage suggests that the north-south axis was primary, and it is therefore not surprising that medieval Scandinavians continued to refer to it. To take again the example of Iceland, superimposed on the division into quarters was the opposition between south and north made manifest in the location of the two bishop's seats, Skálholt for the south and Hólar for the north. That this opposition remained real for Icelanders is, I believe, indicated by the opening words of *Gamli sáttmæli*, the exchange of oaths between the leading Icelandic chieftain and the Norwegian king by which Iceland became a part of Norway: "The men of northern and southern Iceland" are those who enter into this agreement" (translation and discussion in Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 284-87). It must be pointed out here that "north" and "south" may stand only for the affiliation of those who actually entered into the agreement originally, in 1262; the others followed over the next two years. Given the location of the episcopal sees and the general nature of the statement within the document, however, I remain inclined to the position that "north and south" is meant to be inclusive of the entire nation. In support of this inclination may be the fact that no older manuscripts survive; all those now extant were penned well after the event, when the commonwealth was but a distant memory and all Icelanders were subjects of the Norwegian (or Danish/Norwegian) crown.

Västergötland shows a similar privileging of the north-south axis in east Scandinavia. The four hostages who accompanied the new king on his *eriksgata*, the circumambulation of the entire Swedish kingdom undertaken in connection with the ritual of ascending to the monarchy, were to be two from the north and two from the south,

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according to the provisions set forth in the provincial laws *Upplandslagen* and *Västgötalagen*.

The middle Irish *The settling of the manor of Tara* reports that each of the four quarters, as well as the center, of ancient Ireland is associated with certain fundamental qualities: "knowledge in the west, battle in the north, prosperity in the east, music in the south, kingship in the centre" (quoted in Rees and Rees 1961: 122). It goes without saying that the two ends of the north-south axis in ancient Scandinavia were also marked, although not so explicitly. As Ohtere said, no one lived more to the north than he did (i.e., it was uninhabited-except by Saamis) but to the south was an important trading town (i.e., it was populous). Similarly, the *hærvej*, the major trading route over land in Viking and medieval Scandinavia, ran from the relative wastes of northern Jutland to the south, where travelers reached the Danevirke and Hedeby. This is simple geography. The north of Europe was unsettled, the south was populous, and the Church was centered there. But it had cultural implications in such activities as pilgrimages, for the redemptive voyages of Scandinavian pilgrims to Rome described an itinerary from North to South (sinning) and from South to North (redeemed). As Ellegård pointed out (1954-55: 9), the Icelandic pilgrims' itinerary included in *Alfræði íslenzk* uses only the cardinal direction south, even for the stretch from Vercelli to Rome, where the direction is clearly southeast. Contrast this Nordic notion and its underlying reality with important pilgrimage routes available to persons living elsewhere in Europe: the long stretch west through northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela, or – the classic pilgrimage – from Brindisi in Italy east over the Mediterranean Sea to Jerusalem, the conceptual center of the earth.

Just as south meant culture, civilization, and, in the context of pilgrimage, redemption, so the north had something like opposite connotations. These are quite well known, and I will only mention here the recent articles by Rosemary Power (1984), which explores journeys to the north as a fundamental structural feature of the *fornaldarsögur*, and by Rudolf Simek (1986), which describes the geographical notions about the fabulous lands to the north in the *fornaldarsögur* and their relationship to fourteenth-century Icelandic geographical writings. I would add, however, that the special nature of the north must have been recognized throughout the northern lands. Thus the *Kalevala* poems tell of the dangerous journey of Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen to the north in search of the *sampo*,

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and thus the shaman's hut had its door facing south, with no opening in the north wall save a tiny trap door for the use of the spirits (on these see Lid 1951). And the earliest Icelandic history assigns a privileged status to the north, whatever the ostensible reasons, when it reports that the men of the north were allowed to establish an extra *várþing* 'spring assembly' in connection with the division of the land into quarters.

South, too, has its story. At the seam between myth and history (*die gelehrte Urgeschichte*), as known to many learned medieval Icelanders and reported by Snorri both in the Prologue to his Edda and in *Ynglinga saga*, which begins his compilation of Norwegian kings' sagas, Odin brought culture to the north from the south, and with it instigated the prehistory and hence the history of the Icelanders. Myth recorded in the thirteenth century maintains a clear distinction between north and south, most famously in Snorri's account of the origin of Ymir in the oppositions north/cold/grim/Niflheimr and south/hot/bright/Muspellsheimr. Perhaps Snorri had the fourth stanza of *Völuspá* in mind here, which mentions the fertilizing rays of the sun, shining from the south, but it is also plain that he is drawing on medieval learned geography, contrasting the Arctic and Africa, and on Christian conceptions (Lorenz 1984: 116; Holtsmark 1964: 29). That Surtr and destructive fire depart from the South at Ragnarök is usually taken as an Iranian loan. But because they do, creation and destruction both travel along the north-south axis (although the east is also important, as will be discussed below). Note, too, that early Viking Age graves have a north-south orientation; later this changes to the east-west orientation typical of Christian burial practices. Interestingly, much earlier burial practices also suggest the dyadic opposition of north and south, which in Proto-Indo-European was associated with the distinction between right and left, in which right and south are positively marked and north and left negatively marked (Mallory 1989: 140). In the burial customs of the Corded Ware culture, which was presumably both Indo-European and closely connected with Germanic, Baltic, and Slavic, males are lying on their right sides and females on their left sides, both facing south and the relative positive marking of south (Mallory 1989: 244).

The east-west axis was of less fundamental importance than the north-south axis, but it was still significant. To start with the Germanic evidence: it is difficult to doubt Bede's testimony to the

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effect that the name of *Eostur-monath* 'Easter-month' bore the name of a pagan goddess (*De temporum ratione*, ch. 13), who since Grimm has been associated with a hypothetical Old High German Ostara and whose name clearly is equivalent to that of Aurora and similar figures (Grimm 1966: 289-91); that is, she was a sun goddess. Citing Theodor Frings (1966: 38-40), Jan de Vries reiterates the best explanation for her absence in north Germany and Scandinavia if she was indeed a pan-Germanic deity: under the influence of the Cologne archdiocese, *pascha* replaced the native name of the spring holiday in north Germany (and hence later Scandinavia), whereas southern Germany and England are to be regarded as relic areas (de Vries 1956-57: v. 1, 357). If this explanation is correct, however, we may wonder why *Eastre*/**Austra* left no placename evidence in the North. Given the silence of the sources, we must look elsewhere for signs of the meaning of the east-west axis.

Such terms as *landsuðr* (southeast) and *útnorðr* (northwest) derive from sailing north-south in sight of land, and this left its mark in the Norse conceptual directional terminology, *út* ("out" toward Iceland, i.e., west) and *útan* ("in" toward Norway, i.e., east), although there were substantial local variations in usage, as Stefán Einarsson in particular demonstrated. In this regard it should be noted that the Atlantic sailing routes of the Vikings essentially involved making good a constant latitude course; that is, sailors apparently could keep on an east-west line even if they had no way of determining where on the line they were.[3] One reached one's destination by staying on this line, and to stray from it, in a northerly or southerly direction, could spell disaster. This is seen in the names of the Greenlandic colonies: the East and West colonies lie in fact on a SE-NW line, but are so named because they were reached by sailing conceptually west. However, the large unsettled (hence unknown, dangerous) tract to the north was called *norðrsetr*. As an unsettled area, it was not reached, conceptually at least, by tracing the east-west line, even though one followed the coast just as one did to get from the eastern settlement to the western settlement.

The directionals *út* and *útan* suggest that the ends of the east-west axis, like those of the north-south axis, were marked, if less clearly. As culture came from the south, so settlement came from the east. This notion is repeated in the demythologized geographical literature: according to the *Heimlýsing* of Hauksbók, which was based on Isidore's Encyclopedia but contains this inserted passage,[4] Sweden

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was settled from Thrace, Norway from Sweden, Iceland from Norway, and Greenland from Iceland. Here we have the bringing of culture to Scandinavia along the north-south axis and the movement of culture within Scandinavia along the east-west axis; the directions are south-north and east-west. Given the location of this passage in an Icelandic text, we may perhaps infer the existence in medieval Iceland of some sort of notion of manifest destiny, and it might be instructive to read *Íslendingabók* and *Landnámabók* in this light. Later Icelandic geographers agreed on the general directions involved, although admittedly they were following cultural norms established elsewhere in Europe: *Upphaf allra frasagna* introduces the origin of the nations with the following words: "Hedan skulo vier uikia austr i Asiam, ok þaðan i uestr, ok segia, huersu lond hafa bygz i fystu." ("From here we turn east to Asia, and thence to the west, and we recount how lands were first settled") (quoted in Mel'nikova 1986: 94). Here it is instructive to recall that Icelandic translators sometimes used the words *úthaf* or *útsjór* 'outer sea' (or "western sea"?) for Latin *oceanus*, instead of the synonymous and perhaps more to be expected *umsjór* 'surrounding sea' (Simek 1990: 200; Fritzner 1973: s.v.).

A different conception is found in a section of *Rímbeygla*, which reports that Gautelfr (the Göta älv) separates Norway and Sweden and flows west into the sea. In other words, Sweden is south of Norway, as the text in fact states: *Gengr Svíaveldi fyrir sunnan elfina* ("the Swedish realm runs to the south of the river"). Here the north-south classification principle has been used. The author goes on, however, to list various peoples and districts within Sweden, situating them with relative compass directions and gradually moving east. Farthest to the east is Visingsö, where the king keeps his treasures in a stout castle, *ok þar er mest traust hans í öllu ríki* ("and there is his safest place in all the kingdom") (quoted in Mel'nikova 1986: 171). The location of the center of the Swedish kingdom all the way to the east agrees with the idea that Sweden was settled first in Scandinavia and that culture spread west from it, as in the *Heimlýsing*.

The combining of north-south and east-west oppositions in the *Rímbeygla* passage invokes a principle similar to that apparently employed in Greenland: travel on the north-south axis involves the crossing of boundaries between kingdoms, there between the settled and unsettled whereas travel east-west was conceptually safe and self-related, as is expressed in both instances by the traveler's staying within a single cultural sphere. This conception may be indicated by

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the plans of Iron Age longhouses, known especially from western Denmark, which have a long side facing south (presumably for warmth), and the interior divided into two regions, with human habitation on the west, with a hearth, and stalls for animals on the east (see especially Hedeager 1992: 196-97). It is certainly expressed in the mythology, where creation and destruction have to do with the north-south axis, as we have seen, and events falling temporally between them align spatially with the east-west axis. Thus, for example, Agnarr and Geirrøðr travel west and east across the sea (assuming that we should take *út* with its directional sense) according to the prose introduction to the eddic poem *Grímnismál*, and Odin begets an avenger for Baldr on a giantess, Rindr, who lives in the *vestrsalir* 'western halls'. The most important example in this instance is of course comprised by Thor's journeys to the east to slay giants.

Outside of the orientation of churches and perhaps the plan of longhouses, it is difficult to locate any ethical associations with the ends of the east-west axis, except in the mythology, which associates the giants with the east and does so in several sources: *Völuspá*, *Hárbarðsljóð*, *Lokasenna*, and of course *Snorra edda*. In a note, Hastrup suggests that "the opposition between centre and periphery was associated with the opposition between east and west. This is an inversion of the commonly held Norwegian conception of west being *út*-out to sea" (1985: 256n6). Given what I have just said about the east-west axis, the location of the giants to the east may indeed seem paradoxical, since the giants were the enemies of the gods and to reach their realm certainly involved crossing boundaries. On the other hand, the relationships between gods and giants were such that marriage between them was possible, and they seem to adhere to roughly the same laws. We may wonder whether the thirteenth-century Icelandic scribes and audiences may have smiled from time to time at the overlap between Norwegians and giants suggested in the fit between their geographic situation and their mythology. It is, however, important to note that the word used in the mythology for east is *austr*, not the Icelandic directional *útan*; a usage which separates Iceland from the mythological representation of the cosmos in the mythology, even if the Icelanders did refer to Norwegians as *austmenn* 'easterners.'

The assignment of giants to the east places north and east in similar conceptual categories, and they are joined, through Surtr, with the south. Thus only west appears to be relatively unmarked in the

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mythology, with only minor exceptions: according to stanza 10 of *Grímnismál*, a wolf hangs to the west of the portal at Valhöll, and Odin begets Váli, the avenger of Baldr, on Rindr in the *vestrsalir*, as was mentioned above. We might read the first case, the wolf west of the door at Valhöll (the only directional fact forthcoming about the hall), as indicative of the topsy-turvy conditions that should obtain in the abode of the dead: in a "real" world, some other direction, probably south or east, would have been used. Perhaps we should imagine the mythology in its formative stages in western Norway before oversea travel was feasible; in such a case there might have been little to associate with west, and much to associate with north, east, and south. More usefully, we should regard the mythology in the context of its recording in Iceland, a country founded by travel to the west, by men who might have held westward travel in a relatively positive light. This mythology was their prehistory, and they knew or could argue that much of it took place in Sweden, at the east end of the axis of travel on which they comfortably sat. Where else would the giants be but off the map, as it were, to the east? That is, if culture entered Scandinavia from the south and then traveled west, the opposite direction, east, would then represent nature, to cast the opposition in the terms of Lévi-Strauss. This supposition makes the giants' eastern habitat an Icelandic notion, which no textual evidence can deny, given Iceland's hegemony in the recording of the mythology. It also eliminates the otherwise awkward conflict between the east as the location of the hypothetical sun goddess Eastre and as the abode of evil creatures; the former would be older, the latter younger.

By now it should be apparent that the shift described by Rask, Petersen, Weibull and others tells only a small part of the entire story. What is important is not simply that what people called north was northeast or east by modern reckoning, but rather that north was a conceptual category, part of a structure of doubled oppositions created by culture and bearing meanings imposed on it by culture. The four parts of this structure were necessary for a complete world, a horizontal world with two conceptual axes crossing at the center, in a structure described by historians of religion as typical of many cultures, as was noted at the beginning of this essay. Going beyond this paradigm, we have asserted that in medieval Scandinavia the two axes were not equal: the north-south axis appears to have been primary, and movement along it was charged with primordial and historical (Christian) ethical meaning. The east-west axis invoked

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first history, and because settlement along it traveled from east to west, medieval Icelanders could locate themselves meaningfully in the cosmos, even if this involved some conflict with the mythology they recorded in the thirteenth century. The four axial ends were charged with meaning, especially in historical and mythological contexts.

Notes

[1]Two manuscripts have *áttir*, two *ættir*.

[2]Although the axes themselves appear to be missing in the examples just discussed from mythological texts, they may be implicit in the mythic universe, with the world tree at the center and the dwarfs or some other kind of posts at the corners. Regarding the latter, see the application of Hugo Pipping (1925); additional discussion in Lorenz 1984: 164.

[3]The situation is very complex, and the relevant scholarship involves numerous surmises. See Binns 1980: 69-87 for an appropriately skeptical treatment. My remarks here are meant simply to establish latitude courses as a concept for voyaging, however Viking sailors actually determined their positions. Later in the Middle Ages, of course, actual latitude sailing was possible.

[4]Pritsak (1981: 533) assigns it to the "Trojan saga."

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Signposts of Meaning – Tokens of Power: Aspects of Early Medieval Literary Criticism According to "Authorial" Comment[1]

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Recent publications in literary theory (Santerres 1990, Derive 1993) emphasize that in many oral or predominantly oral literatures, there exist, contrary to earlier views, "des théories littéraires locales", a meta-discourse on that culture's own verbal production. This phenomenon has not been very well researched so far, but certainly merits in-depth investigation. Oral art from around the world could and does provide an enormous amount of nascent literary criticism, e.g., statements about what makes a story a good story or a poem a good poem, or why one should tell stories or listen to them, or why a story must be true, etc.

My paper tries to demonstrate the validity of such an approach by means of Old Icelandic and Old Irish texts (generally regarded as based on orally transmitted material) from the 8th to the 15th century AD. It shows, I hope, the extremely high degree of relevance which the poets and storytellers, as well as their audience, attributed to their stories and poems. To judge from the texts, society at large shared this view. One of the reasons for this state of things was that the subject-matter of the stories and poems was also the building-blocks of group identity. Another reason, at least equally important, was that the traditions contained material revealed to poets, heroes and even gods while they were in a state of ecstasy. This ultimate ground of inspiration served as the highest guarantee of truth and relevance, and seems to go very far back in time.

"My word is pure and free of all untruth; it is the word of my father; it is the word of my father's father. I will give you my father's

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words just as I received them ... We are the depositaries of oaths which the ancestors swore. Listen to my word, you who want to know."

These are the words of the West African *griot* Djeli Mamadou Kouyaté.[2] Many traditional poets and storytellers all over the world could have made similar claims, and have done so. Such a considerable emphasis on telling the truth has of course not escaped the attention of different disciplines. History, for example, has for some time endeavoured to reconstruct the past with the help of oral sources.[3] The success of such attempts initially seemed rather limited. This was mainly due to the lack of corroborating data from outside the oral tradition. However, there are definite signs of hope on the horizon: progress in the fields of archaeology and place-name research. What one can say at present is that, in some cases, it has been possible to establish a remarkable continuity in that oral traditions have indeed preserved facts accurately over several thousands of years[4]. Such a remarkable stability cannot, however, be regarded as the rule.

One could now continue and discuss the promising state of interdisciplinary cooperation between folk narrative research, history of religions, archaeology and place-name research, especially in Scandinavia, and illustrate this with examples, say, for the significance of regional centres for the genesis and development of early Scandinavian kingdoms, or for the role of early medieval gold bracteates in the aristocratic propaganda for the worship of the deified shaman Odin. This is, however, not my intention in the present article.

I shall instead approach the problem of early medieval traditions and their significance from quite a different angle – that of "literary theory" and "literary history". It is the handbooks of "literary history" that deal with that small part of early medieval Germanic and Celtic texts that has been preserved. The extant texts are arranged in a historical sequence, e.g., according to dates of codification or historical developments known from other sources. Not infrequently, a historical development from supposedly older, more "primitive" forms to more elaborate and "therefore" younger ones has simply been taken for granted.[5] Such an ideology of simple, linear literary "progress" can certainly be defended for certain lines of development of printed literature, but is a gross oversimplification, even distortion in the case of all "literature" that was or is primarily produced and

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transmitted orally, even at a time when writing is used by certain groups to preserve a certain selection of "texts" for certain purposes. The more one reads "oral literature"[6] from all over the world, the more obvious it becomes that different phenomena are often simultaneous, fulfilling different functions or being used by different groups in a society. When forms do become obsolete or extinct, it is usually because the corresponding function or group no longer exists.

This simple observation comes easily after a few years' research[7] in oral art, and seems to me quite significant. It shows nothing less than an authentic and almost universal "law" of *relevance*. Literature, oral art (and other art forms) must be relevant to be preserved, relevant at least to specific groups or for specific purposes. Something which is totally irrelevant will certainly not be told or preserved. It will disappear.

Two lines of thought start here. The first one is that the immense masses of preserved oral material must have been relevant, and one would be led to try and answer the question why this was the case. The second consideration starts from the observation that an uneasiness begins to be discernible as regards the future role of literary theory and practice in a world increasingly dominated by techniques and media that are themselves influenced by a "new orality" (and this new orality even includes its non-artistic everyday aspects "down" to sheer ungrammaticality).

The main purpose of the present article is to contribute to an answer to the first question, based on some early medieval tradition areas. It can, however, also shed light on a future self-awareness of literary studies. Let us consider this problem first.

A recent French overview of literary theory[8] correctly states that "L'oraliture ... est encore aujourd'hui le mode littéraire principal et dominant dans un certain nombre de pays" (p. 45), that is, principally, that oral art is alive and well. It is, moreover, increasingly a source of inspiration for European writers "qui vont se ressourcer, bien plus consciemment et systématiquement que dans le passé, dans ces contrées lointaines qui sont en contact toujours vivant avec le fonds populaire" (p. 55). Europe going back to the sources – not its own (probably supposed to be irretrievably lost), but those of "far-away regions" (certainly also referring to Africa)! The chapter in which this (correct) statement is contained, has the heading "Vers un champ littéraire planétaire unifié?" – likewise a correct assessment of future trends. The conclusion of that chapter is as follows:

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> L'oralité dans sa fonction culturelle s'ouvre sur les dimensions personnelles profondes (psychologique et biologique) et collectives (anthropologique et ontologique) de l'être humain. Elle affecte toute approche théorique précédente, y compris l'analyse du discours, probablement la plus récente. Désormais la réflexion critique devra tenir compte de la fusion écrit–oral; l'oralité est ni détour, ni anti–écriture, mais la base d'un nouveau champ unifié de la culture lettrée en voie de constitution" (57).

This is a good perspective on a future role for literary studies. Prompted as Santerres–Sarkany perhaps was by a sense of the impending marginality of printed literature or even by some dissatisfaction with the rapid succession of literary theories up to and including post–modernism, this French theoretician of literature[9] has clearly seen the positive possibilities inherent in a study of living oral art, possibilities that certainly transcend even the question of the relevance or otherwise of some academic discipline.[10]

The link between modern literary theory and oral (including ancient) texts, already in evidence here, becomes even clearer when one reads the recently published special issue of the *Revue de Littérature Comparée* (1993.1) devoted to "Littérature d'Afrique noire". At the end of a most instructive article in that issue (Jean Derive, 'De l'ethnographie à la poétique: évolution de l'approche critique des littératures orales négro–africaines', 149–160), it is stated:

> Pour clore ce panorama sur l'évolution de l'approche critique des littératures orales négro–africaines, nous mentionnerons une dernière tendance qui peut être considérée comme un nouveau prolongement de l'approche ethnolinguistique. C'est celle qui consiste à rechercher le discours critique que les sociétés orales peuvent tenir sur leur propre production verbale institutionnelle. Trop souvent en effet, on avait jusqu'ici considéré que, dans la mesure où les littératures orales africaines relevaient d'une production essentiellement populaire, il n'existait pas de métadiscours autochtone susceptible d'en théoriser la pratique. Certes, il est sans doute rare de trouver un "art poétique explicite". Toutefois un certain nombre d'études ont mis en évidence que les cultures orales africaines engendraient une idéologie de la pratique littéraire et qu'il existait bien un discours critique sur les fonctions culturelles des genres et sur les critères d'appréciation des oeuvres et de leurs interprétations (157).

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This meta–discourse, also called "théories littéraires locales" (157), is indeed fundamental – fundamental not only to a given society's view of literature and oral art, but even to its worldview. It is this high degree of relevance of oral verbal art I intend to demonstrate for Germanic and Celtic areas. "Outlying" areas such as these might then hopefully in turn become again relevant for the "unified planetary field" envisaged by Santerres–Sarkany.

Let us now, after raising high hopes, follow for a moment the artistic "law" of contrast, and examine the question whether a subject matter that would often appear fantastic and incredible to us moderns, was considered true by earlier audiences[11]. Old Icelandic literature, in fact, preserves a term that must be translated "lying stories" (ON *lygisögur*) and some ON authors / narrators admit that their stories may sound incredible.[12] It is a well–known feature of folktale performances that the audience can express its disbelief, or that the narrator himself can have reservations about his subject matter. Such aspects especially come to the fore when stories are either obviously invented, or when they are recited as entertainment, which entails some distancing from traditions considered to be obsolete but providing escape from everyday life precisely because of their "improbable" aspects. As far as we can see, such attitudes become prevalent after profound changes, e.g., Christianization, the spread of writing, or industrialisation and the decline of rural society. Distancing from previous value systems is of course a natural consequence of such profound changes.[13] We have an Old Icelandic text that is quite instructive in this regard, known as "the Reykjaholar wedding":

> Now there was much joy and good entertainment and many kinds of pastimes: dancing, wrestling, and storytelling ... Hrólfr from Skálmarnes told the story of Hröngviðr the viking, and of Óláfr liðmannakonungr, and of the breaking of the mound of Þráinn the berserk, and of Hrómundr Gripsson, and many verses with it. This story was told to King Sverrir, who said such lying stories were most entertaining. And yet there are people who can trace their ancestors right back to Hrómundr Gripsson.
>
> This story had been put together by Hrólfr himself. Ingimundr the priest told the story of Ormr Barreyjarskáld, many verses therewith including a long poem at the end that he had made himself. And yet, many learned men deem this to be a true story.[14]

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Putting together (ON *setja saman*) or "composing" of a saga and even individual authorship of verses are – most remarkably – not seen by this text as necessarily resulting in untruth. The text reflects differing views by the audience, ranging from the king's professed scepticism (that might even be ironic) to a genuine belief, not only by "many learned men", but even by people who count the "fictitious" hero among their ancestors.

The audience of these sagas can be regarded as quite sophisticated. They would have been quite able to define the difference between an author's creative abilities (seen as "composing" from preexisting material) and pure invention (the latter could only be justified by, e.g., a theological claim to truth for some results of human reasoning).[15] The degree of latitude accorded to a good storyteller was also not unknown to them.[16] One of the factors for success and survival of narrators generally is in fact the dialectics of stability and variability (particularly the latter distinguished a good narrator from an ordinary one). ON poetic tradition, moreover, provided the means of expressing facts or opinions in ways that could be interpreted in more than one sense![17] It is quite understandable that skaldic poetry, developed, as it probably was, in court circles, did provide, for the well–versed skald, some means to "correct" a "misinterpretation" of one's poem, especially an unfavourable one by one's lord! For its composition and appreciation, ON skaldic poetry required a very high degree of formal competence, and a very fine ear. It was one of several possible scenarios that the audience did not at first hearing actually understand all that was being said or rather alluded to. This applied equally to Old Norse and Old Irish audiences (the similarities between ON and OIr poetry have been explained by the historical connections that indeed existed). Such a situation of partial or total incomprehension is described in the Old Irish "The Fate of the Children of Tuirenn".[18] The poem is ostensibly or factually so obscure that the king to whom it is addressed, reacts: "That is a good poem, but I do not understand a word of its sense". "I shall tell thee its sense", the poet replies. There is however more to this scene than the mere question of the immediate intelligibility of complicated OIr poetry. The king senses or understands that the poet through his poem makes certain demands on him, which he feels unable to fulfil. Poets in Old Irish society were powerful in many ways, a reputation quite possibly

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inherited from the druids of Gaul, and it was this power of which the king, like others, was afraid.

A 13th century Icelandic story (later named *Íslendings þáttr sögufróða* "the episode of the Icelander skilled in telling stories") shows how the telling and transmission of stories was seen at the time:

> It occurred one summer that a young and clever Icelander came to the king and requested his hospitality. The king wanted to know whether he had some knowledge from the past, and he replied that he knew stories. The king agreed to take him, on condition that he should always be available to entertain people. This he did, and he became well liked by the retinue; they give him clothes, and the king presented him with weapons. Thus the time went by until Yule.
>
> At that time the Icelander becomes uneasy, and the king wanted to know the cause. It was just a bad mood, was the answer. I don't think so, said the king. Let me guess: You are now finished with your stories since you have told stories to everybody who requested them, the whole winter; you will think it's very awkward that your stories are up just before Yuletide. It is indeed as you say, he said. There is only one story left, and I dare not tell that one; it is the story of your expedition abroad.

The king insists on hearing that story over Yule, however, and thus it is told in episodes on twelve evenings, to cautious reactions by a retinue unsure of their lord's attitude. The text goes on to the king's question:

> Are you not curious to know, Icelander, how I like the story? I am rather anxious to know this, he said. Methinks it is very well told and not at all worse than its subject matter; but who taught you that story? He said: It was my custom out in Iceland that I went to the assembly each summer, and each time I learnt some part of the story from Halldórr Snorrason. Then it is not surprising, said the king, that you know it well. This will bring you luck. Be welcome with me, and you shall always get (from me) what you want. The king provided him with the means to start a business, and he became a successful merchant.[19]

The story is probably realistic in showing the extent of a 13th century narrative repertoire, and the risks involved in some categories of

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subject matter. A good narrator, just like a good poet, had to have a good command of language and style in order to steer clear of politically or otherwise sensitive cliffs.[20] Even an ordinary Icelander in Iceland had to be quite eloquent when he for instance intended to present and win a legal case before the assembly!

Old Icelandic literature not infrequently contains authorial remarks of the type "some say ... but others maintain". This clearly refers to oral (in a few cases though, to written) variants concerning events in a story. The instability of (prose) tradition was thus not unknown. We even have longer passages elaborating on reliability of sources or of the persons to whom certain sources were attributed.

Poetic sources were generally regarded as very reliable. In fact, the complicated formal structure of skaldic poetry does give them a certain stability.[21] Since skaldic poems were considered to be authentic eyewitness accounts (often declaimed in the presence of other witnesses, including the king), it is understandable that they are (as well as Eddic poems) often quoted, in a prose context, as proof that things happened just as the prose describes. A rather singular case is the situation in *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 88, where the captors of a ship create (together) an "authorized version" on who first went aboard the vessel!

Generally speaking however, in regard to early medieval Scandinavian and Irish prose traditions, the rule was belief and not scepticism. Some texts state clearly that it would be foolish to reject some (especially miraculous) subject matter as untrue, since not only could many extraordinary things have happened in far-away times and places, but it also was a fact that nothing is impossible for God. And even the devil had the means to produce powerful illusions. In this manner, not a few Scandinavian authors or narrators place the ultimate responsibility for their stories on the broad shoulders of God or the devil, or on the vastness of time and space. This may well have been done in all sincerity!

If the picture for the prose was thus one of a distinct preference for belief as against scepticism, the attitude towards verse was practically one of unconditional trust in its veracity; so much so that verse is one of the several categories of proof adduced in the course of a prose story. This function of verse in a prose context is by no means the only one – generally speaking, seen from the viewpoint of a complete prose story, verses occur at points of what I call heightened "narrative intensity" (*Erzählintensität*).[22] Such central

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strategic points as a warning, preparations for battle, fights, boasts and invectives, the gift of a weapon, the conferring of a name, riddle contests, deathbed verses or the appearance of supernatural beings all have a tendency to the "poetic" form. The convention to use them for underpinning the truth of the narrative can probably be explained by the fact that some verses are older than the surrounding prose (according to linguistic criteria), and that the authors and narrators of prose stories knowingly made use of older verse. However, this does not at all mean that there is always an age difference between verse and prose. Some authors and narrators created their own verses for the story. This was not regarded as improper, it seems, but as a legitimate reconstruction of what *could have been* said or done, or as a poetic embellishment to which one felt entitled.

The use of verse constitutes but one of the very important conventions to adduce proof for the veracity of the story. Sometimes, the recitation of deathbed verses (telling the story of the dying person's life) is said to have been taken down simultaneously in runic script, and this even applies to other occasions like a drinking contest! A more realistic situation at least on the face of it, is the passing on of heirlooms (rings, weapons, drinking horns, etc.) accompanied by the recitation of the owner's deathbed verses. Words and objects here support each other's authenticity.

Family heirlooms and the accompanying traditions in fact constitute one of the roots of storytelling in our area. Ancient weapons in particular were very highly esteemed, and Old Norse, Old Irish, Old English and even Middle High German works of literature contain numerous episodes in which they play a prominent part. After all, a good sword could save one's life!

When the Old Irish hero Fergus is about to die, he gives his sword to the poet Aed and says: "My share of the matter for all time shall be this: that men shall rehearse the story of the sword."[23]

The convention of adducing objects as proofs of one's story could include parts of the dead adversary's body, like the head (especially common in Celtic traditions), his tongue, a tooth or a hair (this could be a parody of the convention). Prehistoric burial mounds or bones were often taken as the graves or remains of giants (of whose previous existence one was convinced) including one's own ancestors to whom one sometimes attributed gigantic stature.[24] It was prescribed knowledge for Old Irish poets to know the burial places and manner of death of all ancient Irish heroes.

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Scandinavian tradition does not contain such a clearcut prescription, but indications in *Landnámabók* (the *Book of Settlements*) and other texts show that it was important to be able to attribute burial mounds, some features of the landscape and man–made objects to specific persons, be they famous ancestors or their adversaries:

> In the spring Ingolf travelled west across the moor. He made his home at the spot where his highseat pillars had been washed ashore, and lived at Reykjavík. The highseat pillars can still be seen in the hall there ... (Thorir the Seafarer) had a ship built at Sogn to be blessed by Bishop Sigurd. The beaks of the ship still stand over the door at Miklagard and people tell the weather by them ... King Harald sent Hrollaug a sword, a drinking horn and a gold ring weighing five ounces. The sword later belonged to Koll Sidu–Hallsson, and Kolskegg the Learned once saw the horn.[25]

Witches' and sorcerers' graves were also known and respectfully left alone.

If a family rose to importance in a district, the fame of its previous and present members also spread, and with it the stories – fame without stories is indeed unimaginable. Apart from heroic exploits, which are of course by far the most frequent reasons for fame,[26] there were also poetic skill and legal knowledge to give a man claim to fame. A man, yes – apart from a few poetesses, women's claim to fame was generally confined to their success in supporting their family and in producing (male) offspring. A somewhat notorious group of females is that of witches, evil ones more often than not. Fame and shame also depended on whose side you were on, and on which group's traditions became accepted. An otherwise unknown person is usually referred to in a saga as somebody about whom nothing is told. The fact that a king named Hroerekr is so completely unknown, is explained by his brother (searching a bride for him) as follows:

> Helgi said he was just as excellent as he himself. The only reason why he was not equally famous was that he had always stayed at home in his realm. This was why less was told about him.[27]

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An often quoted verse from the Edda ("Hávamál" 77) runs as follows in the current English translation:

> Cattle die, kinsmen die,
> every man is mortal;
> But I know one thing that never dies:
> the glory of the great dead.

If a one–sided interpretation of this verse is unjustified, we nevertheless do have express statements in Old Norse and Old Irish texts that a hero may be famous even all over the world or until the world's end.[28] Conversely, it is also stated that "many evil stories" are told (about one's adversaries, to be sure).

The main reason, then, that stories were told, and that memories were preserved, was that they were considered worth telling and preserving. They were regarded as something out of the ordinary, extra–ordinary. They were among the most important criteria that defined the position of oneself, one's family and ancestors in the region. It is with good reason that many Germanic, Irish and Welsh heroes were kings,[29] king's sons or members of the royal retinue. The reasons that of all Germanic traditions it is only the Scandinavian one that has preserved a body of praise poetry, could be that the frequent migrations of what is justly called the Age of Migrations, together with probably a multitude of languages, were much less conducive to the preservation of complicated panegyric than were the later Norwegian and Icelandic societies with at least several hundred years of continuous production and appreciation of skaldic poetry in the same language.[30] What we still have from other Germanic areas also is remnants of mnemonic poetry (e.g., king lists in the OE *Wídsíð* or ON *Hervarar saga*; manner and place of kings' deaths in the ON *Ynglingatal*). Old Irish and Welsh poets were also required to possess knowledge of genealogies;[31] in fact, the genealogy of a Scottish king (Alexander III) was recited at his inauguration (cf. plate 1) as "late" as 1249.

A fundamental aspect of traditional societies is thus that the past is not left behind or discarded, but on the contrary lives on in the present and legitimates it, explains it, gives it meaning. Otherwise, i.e., without (oral) traditions, these societies would probably have collapsed. The traditions positioned one in a world to whose essence and meaning they contributed. As Anna–Leena Siikala (1990) expresses it in her study based on fieldwork in

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Kouhajoki, they are a "reflector of cultural consciousness", of identity, signposts of meaning as my title formulates it.[32] An orientation without such signposts was certainly impossible. Conversely, the power provided by such a signpost is almost touchingly expressed by a Somali poet: "The best people are ourselves; of this I have always been sure!"[33]

Although there are certainly psychological reasons for an identification with a hero,[34] these are in my view only an additional factor reinforcing group identity. Old Norse and Celtic literatures contain quite a few remarks that most definitely link traditions (even pagan religious traditions reinterpreted in the light of Christianity) with group identity. Suffice it here to quote from one of the versions of the Icelandic *Book of Settlements*:

> People often say that writing about the Settlements is irrelevant learning, but we think that we can better meet the criticism of foreigners when they accuse us of being descended from slaves or scoundrels, if we know for certain the truth about our own ancestry. And for those who want to know ancient lore and how to trace genealogies, it's better to start at the beginning than to come in at the middle. Anyway, all civilized nations want to know about the origins of their own society and the beginnings of their race.[35]

The need to be aware of one's origins and to contrast oneself to the foreigners are of course indispensable elements of a group identity. One's place among the nations of the earth was indeed defined by one's traditions from the past. These were the signposts that could orient one and give meaning to one's life.

We have seen that the past thus legitimated the present and contributed to its meaning. The connection with the past was, however, not confined to continuing well–established and successful customs or to inheriting claims or character traits from one's ancestors.

It is an uncontestable fact that all archaic societies are deeply anchored in religion. The link between traditions and religion should be immediately apparent. For the Germanic peoples, we may assume some degree of early hero worship connected with sacral kingship and divine ancestors in royal genealogies.[36] This alone is of course quite sufficient as a further example of the religious foundations of group identity.[37]

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Less well known are some other features of the traditions in question. Let us consider for a moment the magical effects sometimes attributed to storytelling or the recitation of poetry. This extremely interesting phenomenon has not to my knowledge been fully investigated in a comparative perspective.[38] With some Amer-Indian tribes, the recitation of heroic exploits was believed to guarantee future victory and fame![39] Could it be that this at one time was also a Germanic view? And what about the claim of an heir to rank in Polynesia that depended on his power to reproduce his "family chants"?[40]

Conversely, the effects of satire in Old Irish tradition could be severe and included illness and death.[41] The Germanic examples for satire are also numerous, but somewhat silent as to possible magical effects.[42] Curses are however frequent.[43] In any case, such instances alone can justify a link between oral art and the supernatural – which, of course, was not a separate realm but just part of existence. The experience of existence in fact included an awareness of the "beyond" which always seemed to be very close.

This awareness of the all–pervasive presence of the supernatural in fact provided the means to overcome what might otherwise have been a profound crisis in group identity, namely Christianization. Continental Germanic peoples, the Anglo–Saxons, the Irish and (hundreds of years later) the Scandinavians all reacted in their own ways, but one of the common traits is that the pagan heroic traditions lived on, even in the monasteries where we do have some testimony of the discussions going on about the desirability of listening to heroic stories. I tend to think that it was due to Christianization that the supernatural elements of a heroic biography[44] were eliminated (or reinterpreted within the new religious system, as illusions for example, but this was easier in prose than within the restrictions of fixed or formulaic verse). The new Christian heroes, of course, were the Saints, and their biographies and legends (containing much orally circulating material) existed alongside the old heroic stories. We even possess some texts that contain speculation about whether the old heroes really had to burn in hell.[45] According to what we know, it was Old Irish tradition that proved most conservative, possibly because it does go very far back in time.[46] Here, the new arch-hero himself, St Patrick, miraculously brings the old heroes back to life in order to baptize them – and to be able to listen to their stories, which practice he then recommends to the general public![47]

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Another at least as interesting Old Irish example concerns the pagan king Conchobar and his death:

> ... he heard that Christ had been crucified by the Jews. At that time a great trembling came over the elements, and the heavens and earth shook with the enormity of the deed that was then done, Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, to be crucified without guilt.
> "What is this," said Conchobar to his druid. "What great evil is being done on this day?"
> "That is true, indeed," said the druid (who then tells the story of the Crucifixion).
> "Awful is that deed," said Conchobar.
> "That man now," said the druid, "was born in the same night in which you were born, on the eighth before the calends of January, though the year was not the same."
> It was then that Conchobar believed ...
> And thereupon Conchobar said, "The men of the world would know what I can do in fighting against the Jews for the sake of the crucifixion of Christ, if I were near Him."
> Then he rose and made the onslaught, ... so that Conchobar died forthwith. Hence the Gaels say that Conchobar was the first pagan who went to Heaven in Ireland, for the blood that sprang out of his head was a baptism to him.[48]

It was evidently of the utmost concern not to have one's old heroes – who often were regarded as ancestors! – rejected by a new religion that regarded itself as the only true belief and the final revelation!

The human mind had evidently been at work to avoid such a heavy blow to one's group identity. It is the same feeling that shines through some of Isaiah Shembe's hymns:

> Let us come in to worship Jehovah.
> We were shut out,
> But now the gates are open.
> Let them in.
> See! Here are the Zulus
> Descendants of Dingana
> And of Senzangakhona.[49]

It would be very strange indeed if that all–pervasive presence of the supernatural, mentioned earlier, so evident in the extant Old Norse, Old Irish, Old Welsh (and to a lesser extent Old English and

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Middle High German) material, had had no bearing on the native speculations about transmission and origin of traditions themselves. One was indeed aware of the limitations of personal and group experience and traditions. The only way to transcend such limitations was contact with the powers of the beyond. Such contact was thought possible in "non–everyday" states of the mind,[50] such as dreams (which were taken very seriously) and generally conditions of ecstasy.[51] Revelations obtained in such a state were considered to possess the highest degree of truth through supernatural guarantee. In the widespread complex of shamanism, a wide range of techniques for attaining ecstasy were available, and during and after ecstasy, the shaman revealed what his "soul" learnt in the beyond about the causes of, and remedies for, war, famine, illness and other catastrophes.

A divine representation of the Germanic shaman was none other than the god Odin[52] (the name is related to, e.g., ON *óðr*, Ger. *Wut* "ecstasy"). This god had to endure terrible ordeals in order to attain the ecstasy required to obtain knowledge and power (*Hávamál* 138ff.). More generally, knowledge and power could be acquired through communication with the dead (e.g., sleeping on a grave, or "consulting" a human skull).[53] The dead were regarded as wiser than the living since they were in permanent contact with the beyond, being part of the "supernatural environment". The skull of the primeval giant Mímir (possibly related to Latin *memor*), consulted by the god Odin himself, possibly in the distant footsteps of Mesolithic cult practices, pronounces "the first word and true knowledge" (Sd 14).[54] The revelation thus obtained is declared as the oldest and (therefore) most true – a "literary theory" of the highest relevance imaginable, since the god's and shaman's pronouncements dealt with questions of life and death. The community in fact depended for its survival on such pronouncements obtained through contact with the beyond. The monuments, objects and tokens adduced as proofs for the veracity of stories thus find their essential completion in the revealed story itself which, even when "merely" repeated, is a Token of Power. The Old Norse term *iarteikn* itself can be said to embody such a view, since it means both "token, proof" and "miracle" performed by God and the saints. The earliest manifestations of shamanism are found in the European Upper Palaeolithic,[55] and it is there that I see the roots of the oldest "literary theory".

The present stage of occidental civilization is rare in the history of mankind in that it has a distinctly secular, a–religious tendency.

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Could it be that this is the seed of its destruction? Be that as it may, let us, at least as a hypothesis, embrace the penetrating conclusion of a well-known French sociologist:

> Despite the crisis of values which we hear so much about nowadays, one value in particular remains unchanging and certain, so much so that we might say that it is independent of all historical and social conditioning, and that in this sense it can be regarded as transcendent. This value finds expression in the fact that most people unconditionally prefer the truth to its opposite.[56]

Notes

[1]This article presents some of the results of a 1993 sabbatical research project. I am grateful to the University of South Africa for advancing my study leave by six months and thus making it possible for me to accept an invitation by the Faculty of Germanic Studies of the Sorbonne (Paris IV) to spend some months there as a Visiting Professor. For support and discussions, I wish to thank in particular Professors Régis Boyer, Yves Chevrel, Jacques Chevrier, Olivier Gouchet, Claude Lecouteux and Jean-Marie Valentin. A special word of appreciation goes to all those graduate students of the Sorbonne who so keenly participated in my seminars on topics such as Germanic Religion, the Voyage to the Beyond, Shamanism, and Modern Swedish poetry. I consider myself privileged to have again experienced the stimulating intellectual climate of a university in the best European tradition.

Due to the amount of material collected, the present paper is limited to Old Norse and Celtic literatures. Other Germanic literatures, as well as French and African (francophone) material, form the background of the study together with Folk Narrative Research, as an enormously expanding discipline. Cf. my bibliography for such studies, as well as for sources of more textual evidence. The quotation marks for "authorial" are clearly justified for oral narrators as well as for medieval authors, since as a rule there is re-telling of earlier stories. Such "authors" can be placed somewhere between an original author and a member of the public, because they were readers/listeners of their predecessors. Such a close link between production and reception should prove most interesting for reception theory, and merits further attention.

[2]Quoted from D T Niane, *Sundiata. An epic of old Mali*, London 1965, p. 1. A simple definition of a *griot* is perhaps "a person trained to preserve and teach historical and other traditions in certain African regions, usually attached to a chief" (my own definition). Cf. also Finnegan 1978: 191.

[3]For Africa, suffice it to refer to Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition. A Study in Historical Methodology*. London 1965.

[4]Cf., e.g., Bausinger und Brückner, *Kontinuität* (Berlin 1969), pp. 105-110.

[5]Cf., e.g., Hans-Robert Jauss, *Alterität und Modernität der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, München 1977, p. 360, where he correctly speaks of the "hochgradig hypothetischen Charakter einer solchen ... weithin ungesicherten 'Geschichte'".

[6]The designation "oral literature" is of course basically a contradiction. In fact, one of Walter Ong's chapters is entitled "Did you say 'oral literature'? Ong does not propose a new term. In my view, "oral tradition" would exclude the non-traditional aspects, and

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coinages like "orature", "oraliture" or "oralature" are, so to speak, still on the waiting list for acceptance. I confess they sound to me somewhat artificial. What about "oral art" or "verbal art"? This would exclude basic everyday communication.

[7]My own interest in oral art goes back to the mid-60s.

[8]Santerres-Sarkany 1990.

[9]He seems to represent a growing trend in French literary studies that again elevates the text from its previously assumed position of complete self-sufficiency to that of a product of society and culture.

[10]From another angle, that of "mass literature", Alain-Michel Boyer (1992) comes to similar conclusions.

[11]Cf. Buchholz 1979, Glauser 1983: 128-145, and *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, 323-325.

[12]Cf. Buchholz 1986-87b, Glauser 1983: 142.

[13]For the changes in religion and Scandinavian group identity, see Buchholz 1993b.

[14]*Þorgils saga ok Hafliða*, ed. Ursula Brown, London 1952: 17ff. The wedding is said to have taken place in 1119.

[15]Cf. Buchholz 1986/87b.

[16]Cf. Buchholz 1980, chs III.1 and III.2b (ironical distance of narrator from narration); more examples for this in Glauser 1983: 128-145.

[17]Cf. Clunies Ross.

[18]Cf. Buchholz 1980: 71f.

[19]ON text: Ranke-Hofmann, 80-83. English translation by P. Buchholz. The story in its extant form dates from ca. 1220 and takes place during the reign of Haraldr hardráði (1047-1066).

[20]Cf. Buchholz 1992b.

[21]Cf. Buchholz 1988: 148-150.

[22]Cf. Buchholz 1980: 68-78.

[23]Cross and Slover 487.

[24]Cf. the fundamental work by Grinsell, and Lönnroth.

[25]Pálsson and Edwards, p. 2.

[26]Suffice it to quote from the Welsh Gododdin (dealing with a battle in AD 600), cf. Jarman, p. 77:

> Although they were slain, they slew,
> And until the end of the world they shall be praised.

[27]ON original in Buchholz 1980: 45.

[28]Cf., e.g., Buchholz 1980: 46.

[29]Of course, there were many kingdoms of a rather modest size. An important observation that should actually not be relegated to a footnote, is that the etymology of Gmc **kuningaz* (OE *cyning*, ON *konungr*, MHG *künec* etc.) is "the one who belongs to the (i.e., the noble) family / clan (**kunja*)". Descent qualified one as a candidate (not necessarily a successful one) for the kingship.

[30]I intend to expand on this in a forthcoming publication. I am not aware of such a view having been expressed before, apart from my own remarks in Buchholz 11 on the late Roman scholar Syagrius whose knowledge of the rules of Germanic poetry was such that his poetic judgement was feared by what was already becoming the poets of the ruling class.

[31]Cf. Caerwyn Williams, pp. 28-30.

[32]Cf. Buchholz 1993b and Honko pp. 403-423.

[33]Finnegan 1978: 108.

[34]Cf. Jauss, pp. 212-258 "Interaktionsmuster der Identifikation mit dem Helden".

[35]Pálsson and Edwards, p. 11.

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[36]A well-known quotation from Jordanes (Caerwyn Williams, p. 18): proceres suos, quorum quasi fortuna uincebant, non puros homines, sed semideos, id est Ansis, uocauerunt.
[37]I may be forgiven for quoting the title of one of my own articles here.
[38]The only article is P. Sartori, 'Erzählen als Zauber', *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 40 (1930): 40-45. Cf. Buchholz 1981. More examples: Buriat storytelling for the purpose of facilitating the hunt (Hatto, p. 36). The words of a Rsi, a certain category of singer, always prove true (Tibetan: *Zentralasiatische Studien* 6 [1972]: 367).
[39]Röhrich, pp. 163f.
[40]Finnegan 1978: 270.
[41]Cf. Knott and Murphy, pp. 77-82, and Buchholz 1987/88: 158-160, also for other magical powers of the Old Irish poet.
[42]An Icelandic folktale has trolls recompensate the singing of a heroic ballad. Buchholz 1980: 47f. Cf. also Joseph Harris, 'Satire and the Heroic Life: Two Studies', In *Oral Traditional Literature* (Lord *festschrift*), pp. 322-340.
[43]Cf. Buchholz 1980: 91-95.
[44]Cf. e.g. Buchholz 1980: 79-111.
[45]A Scandinavian text that answers in the affirmative, is quoted in Buchholz 1986/87b: 203f.
[46]Cf. Kenneth Jackson, *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age*, Cambridge 1964.
[47]For a relevant text, see Buchholz 1986/87b: 202f.
[48]From 'Death Tales of the Ulster Heroes', in *Ancient Irish Tales*, pp. 333-346 (Conchobar 343ff., quotation from 345f.).
[49]Finnegan 1978: 141.
[50]For the present purpose, I shall not deal with festive cultic occasions, although mass psychosis could occur in such contexts (sometimes involving, as is known, human sacrifices).
[51]Cf. Buchholz 1968 and 1993a, and generally Varagnac, pp. 5-16.
[52]Cf. Buchholz 1984.
[53]Cf. Buchholz 1980: 120f.
[54]Cf. Buchholz 1980: 121.
[55]The etymology of ON *teikn*, Ger *Zeichen*, Engl *token*, Afr. *teken* etc. very clearly shows both aspects. Finnish *taika* (early loan from Gmc **taikna*) means an omen or oracle. The IE root's significance is "to shine brilliantly or with a bright light". If I am permitted a bit of speculation, sensations of extreme brightness could be part of the ecstatic experience, also seen as a vision or manifestation of Heaven (the Eternal Light). For visual hallucinations in ecstasy see also David Lewis-Williams, *Images of Power. Understanding Bushman Rock Art*, Johannesburg 1989, passim. An excellent treatment of palaeolithic spiritual life according to the testimony of art, is Narr pp. 128-163 ('Geistesleben im Spiegel der Kunst'). For shamanism see there pp. 146ff.
[56]Boudon, quotation from p. 205.

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The Individual and Community in African Traditional Religion and Society

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Émile Durkheim, in his theory of the origin of religion, lucidly inferred that deities that men worshipped in primitive societies were society itself 'deified' (Durkheim 1961, Ch. 1, Wack 1958: 40-48, Skorupski 1976: 1-4). Society was so afraid of being destroyed by rebellion-prone man that it devised a strategy of self-defence and survival by 'sacralizing' itself. Consequently, when one worships a deity, one is invariably worshipping the society in which one dwells. Society was exalted to divine status, deserving of worship and preservation. No individual put himself above the society as represented in the deity, and no-one saw himself or his security outside the confines of that society.

In some monarchical societies kings were regarded as sacred representative figures, standing for the people. Such sacred kings were believed to be immortal, for their death would mean death for the whole community that they represented. When they die, people euphemistically describe them as having 'joined the ancestors'. In some instances, as among the Silluk of East Africa, the ailing king's heart is removed and given to his successor to eat so as to avoid having the king experience natural death. Regicide helped him join his ancestors without conventional dying and assisted in the perpetuation of the sacred kingship.

Although this sociological theory of the origin of religion has long been criticized, by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1965: Ch. 2) among others, the theory continues to be pertinent to African experience. The social structuring of some traditional African communities provides empirical data that permit the conclusion that society is so highly revered that the will and freedom of the individual are reduced, submerged, often subjugated. The individual is insignificant in the greater scheme of things.

This paper will not enter the polemic on the validity or relevance of Durkheimian theory on the origin of religion, but from this perspective will assess the values attached to individual personality

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and spirituality in a traditional African religious setting. Individual perceptions, identity, behavior and self-actualization within a community environment will be analyzed in relation to their collective communal counterparts. The place of the individual *homo religiosus* in a religious universe will be reviewed in the context of socio-economic development in the contemporary African world. A synthesis will sought, utilizing historical, psychological, theological and anthropological methodologies.

Since Africa is too extensive for a sharp and clear focus, we shall limit the scope of the analysis to data collected among the Igbo in south-eastern Nigeria. One of the largest ethnic groups in the West African sub-region, the Igbo provide sufficiently broad-based data for an in-depth analysis. Assertiveness, a 'republican' outlook, egalitarianism, willingness to travel and involvement in community development projects have led to the establishment of large Igbo communities in many parts of Africa and the New World (Onunwa 1990b: 2). Igbo traditional religion offers an authentic model of African traditional religion. Where ethnic particularity becomes too evident, it will be avoided in the elaboration of generalizations intended for a wider validity. As a complement, relevant data from other African ethnic groups may be adduced to support these points of view.

Despite the fact that Igbo society is egalitarian and of a republican type where the individual counts for a good deal, it offers the paradox of society taking pre-eminence in certain circumstances affecting worship, morals, ethics, and societal norms. The 'I' is often submerged in the 'we' of traditional society. This has not been without long-term consequences in societal backwardness, underdevelopment and retrogression in many African societies, for which the repression of individual psyches, talents and potential must share a portion of the responsibility.

Religion in Traditional Society

The African world is primarily a religious one in which every object has religious significance and meaning. The conception of the secular world is of one still under the surveillance and control of spiritual beings. Cosmology has its base in religion. This is a world in which life has a rhythm, the ordered succession of one event after another, symbolizing dynamism but also harmony and consistency. Disruption to order and harmony is tantamount to a disruption of life

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itself. There are serious ethical implications to the maintenance of this harmony and to avoidance of the dangers inherent in disruption to a precarious universe. Religion is then at the core of the world-view. Man's misdemeanors provoke the anger of the gods, and when the centre releases its hold, things begin to fall apart (Achebe 1962).

Man maintains the stability and harmony of the universe through the observance of rules that are codified and ratified, although in unwritten form. Everyone knows the rules as they are orally transmitted from one generation to the next. Such rules and norms become 'inviolable' sanctions, ethical codes, customs, traditions, life codes. In such primary societies, religion becomes an instrument for explanation, prediction and control of space-time events.

Religion offered satisfying, encouraging explanations to the mysteries of life. Whenever an unusual event took place, a religious explanation offered reassurance to curious but bewildered man. Since the African believes that nothing in the world exists beyond the scope of God, it is within the realm of the divine that all explanation is to be sought.

Secondly, man uses religion to predict when misfortune would befall him or fortune favor him. Prediction through augury, divination, clairvoyance, soothsaying or any other psycho-mystical exercise is situated within man's spirituality and religiosity. The manipulation of religious objects and recitation of incantations assist man in scrutinizing the future. Through oracular deities man also analyzes the past in relation to the present and future. Benjamin Ray (1976: 156ff.) sees oracles as a revisitation of the past and interpretation of its events that can influence the present and determine the future.

Thirdly, religion becomes a powerful instrument of control in society. Rebellious man is held in check by religious sanction, ritual law, 'commandments'. Apodictic principles establish norms by enshrining religious codes of behavior in the minds of members of primitive societies (e.g., Exodus, Ch. 20). Religious rite is used to control not only man but also God and the spirit beings. When a man wants to curry favor or manipulate a deity to achieve his desire, he performs a sacrificial rite. Such 'sweet smells' entice the divine beings to man's side. Properly performed, effective sacrifice coupled with purity of life can block the anger of unfriendly spirits and win the favor of patron deities and ancestors. Religious rites are used to better man's chances. Through religion, then, man in traditional

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societies kept to the rhythms of the universe while achieving desired goals. From time immemorial man has used religion as an instrument to explain how and why things happened, to predict the consequences of action or inaction, and to control situations and events, people and spirits.

The Characteristics of Traditional Religion

From the above one deduces a society in which cosmology is deeply immersed in religion. World-views are intellectual, 'rational' ways of explaining the order and systems that undergird human life and its environment. For non-classical societies, sources of the study of such world-views are a people's myths, customs, taboos and proverbs. For instance, when Marcel Griaule and his team visited the Dogon people of Mali in the West African sub-region, he was able to engage a venerable old priest, Ogotemmeli, in conversation for a period of thirty-three days and discovered for himself what might be described as the Dogon perception of the world. Through the conversation Griaule won insight into the cosmology that supported African belief and guided action (Griaule 1965: 11). Such a world-view is a 'unified' picture of the cosmos, explained by a system of concepts that order natural and social rhythms, and the place of individuals and communities in them (Kalu 1978: 39). Although the erection of a cosmology is an intellectual exercise, it is based on the important experiences of time and space.

The African world of time and space is a microcosm, the complement to the short or narrow life-span most project for themselves. Indeed, the microcosm is so small that a man's whole life is perceived and conceptualized within the enclave in which he lives. Because the African world is microcosmic, its religion is localized and ethnic in nature. Within the restricted locale, no individual is thought greater than the patron deity of the clan or the clan itself. The largest institution of which one can conceive is the community, as represented by its tutelary divinity. Consequently the individual habitually submits his will, personal charisma and authority to the 'collective will' of the community as epitomized in the clan.

Traditional religion is not characterized by canonical texts or institutionalization. Its creed and tenets are transmitted orally from one generation to another. In such a folk religion and in such restricted environments the gods becomes the heroes and heroines of various compartments of life. Religion operating within such small

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social units molded a society in which each individual knew every other one. There is no anonymity in such a small and closed system, and few secrets. Marriage patterns are endogamous and people beyond one's immediate locale were given little thought. In such 'small-scale' societies there exist numerous problems, some of which Monica Wilson (1971: 106) has identified as follows:

> ... isolation ... a world without books ... much sickness without effective medicine, a world without transport, in which famine threatens ... a world of sameness since hunter and cultivator enclosed in his own tiny community does not savour that variety which entrances the outsider visiting one isolated society and then another.

Ethnically based folk religions operating in microcosmic environments limit the concept of neighborliness and amity. The individual in such an environment lived and died by himself without contact with a greater world. This, too, made him 'small' in relation to the society or clan in which he lived.

Other features of traditional religion are its holistic and pervasive nature. It permeates every department of life. As John S. Mbiti has explained (1974: 1), the African carries his religion everywhere he goes. Wherever he is, there too is his religion – on the farm, in the house, in battle, in the market, in the stream, in the shrine. Thus the African is 'incurably religious'. This does not necessarily destroy a conception of secular events and things but there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, the holy and the profane; all aspects of life are within reach of religious influence. Writing about the Igbo of Nigeria in the early 1900s, one of the colonial officers, Major A. G. Leonard, observed the pervasive influence of religion and wrote (1966 [1906]: 429):

> [T]hey are in the strict and natural sense of the word a truly and deeply religious people, of whom it can be said ... that they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously and sin religiously. In a few words the religion of these [Igbo], as I have all along endeavoured to point out, is their existence and their existence is their religion.

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No-one in traditional African society professes any other faith than the religion of his clan. Everyone is born into it; no-one is converted to it. People inherit a faith and there is no option to profess ideological principles such as agnosticism, atheism or to live as a free-thinker. Membership in the clan cult is pre-ordained and imperative. These are 'ethical religions' in which the proclamation of doctrine is less important than the performance of rites as and when due. Even perfunctory participation in a rite indicates loyalty to the clan cult. Since traditional religion is not missionary and evangelical, it imposes itself on no-one. But, conversely, those born in the clan are invested with the cult of their ancestors and have no option to do otherwise. In other words, an Igbo born and bred in his local community is the embodiment of the religion that shapes his life-style. In this vein, Professor J. A. Umeh, in his preface to *Studies in Igbo Traditional Religion* (Onunwa 1990b: xii), did not mince words in stating the integral nature of Igbo religion with Igbo life:

> [T]he Igbo traditional religion is Igbo life and Igbo moral, ethical and humane practices as opposed to 'modern' once-a-week assembly of well dressed pretensions which neither touch the depth of minds nor are reflected in social, political or economic relationships between individuals, between groups, and between nations.

Obviously African traditional religion in general and the Igbo model in particular exercise considerable influence over adherents. Every true votary is meant to obey and comply with the stipulations of the religion. As an ethical system that has no systematic creed to recite nor written Scripture to read and memorize, the individual's practice of the teachings of the faith is more often than not the most important aspect of daily routine. The practice of religion is more emphasized than intellectual assent to dogma.

This aspect of the religion, although important in several ways in maintaining continuity, has other, crushing effects on individual devotees. Since religion is a group affair, individual contributions to its development, reform and propagation seem insignificant. It is a religion that has no single person as founder, no single person as its chief prophet, no single individual as its most powerful messiah, savior, evangelist or preacher. In subtle ways, the stature of the individual votary is gradually submerged. Stated more categorically

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from Benjamin C. Ray's pungent analysis of African religion, faith is a group and not an individual affair. Religion cannot be a personal and individual affair in a traditional setting (1976: 1-2).

The long term implications of this 'group centeredness and emphasis' of traditional religion on individual members of the community will engage the attention of the next section, which considers how religion may unconsciously become a 'personality crushing' institution in which group welfare is given pride of place to the detriment of single personality. Africa's gregarious spirit is exaggerated at the cost of individual comfort, freedom and success.

The Individual in the Traditional Religious Scheme

Africans firmly believe that a tree cannot make a forest, although, for a forest to develop, individual trees must lend their roots and branches. The community survives in so far as individual members make contributions toward such survival. No individual is the center point for cohesion and group solidarity. The egalitarian and republican nature of Igbo society is sustained only by joint programs, collective solidarity and group-consciousness.

Traditional religion, which is society itself, held its members together, erected moral codes that promoted co-existence and created goodwill and comradeship among peers. Because one object is 'mystically' related to another within the community, one individual's mistake could cause a dangerous chain reaction affecting the survival of the entire group. People are implicated in complex connections with others, and it is only the community as a whole that can maintain the centre and its equilibrium. If the centre's tie to the supernatural is broken through individual misdemeanor, the whole system may collapse. This cycle of relationships is not particular to the Igbo but is a pan-African belief. For instance, there is a common saying that *Otu mkpuru aka ruta mmanu o zuo ndi ozo*, implying that when 'one finger is stained with oil, it spreads to others'. One's misfortune in a group-centered society easily affects others, just as one bad apple can spoil others.

Igbo religion is life- and world-affirming. This is highlighted in the belief in reincarnation and ancestors' interest in returning to the world of time and space to enjoy community with their kin. Health and life are uppermost in the prayers of the traditional Igbo. Death is a disruption of life and of earthly bliss. But there are many deeply embedded factors that may diminish or disrupt the cherished long life

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and good health.

One of these factors is human sacrifice. This ritual practice of traditional societies (still in force in secret today) is based in the belief in the pre-eminence of the collective life of society or clan over that of the individual. It is at this point that Durkheim's theory has greatest relevance to the Igbo world (Skorupski 1976: Ch. 1). Although the corporate existence of the community or clan is important, it has been so exaggerated in traditional Igbo society that individual right to life is demoted. Consequently, an individual could lose his life if the community decided to use him as a sacrificial victim to placate an angry deity. The potential for abuse is obvious.

Human sacrifice was one of the greatest problems against which the colonial administrators and Christian missionaries fought in Africa. Both led campaigns against the killing of twins, trial by ordeal and human sacrifice. Denounced by the British as barbaric, such practices nonetheless formed part of the social and religious life of the community (Afigbo 1972: 71). It should be emphasized that it was devotion to the community that motivated the followers of traditional religions to offer human beings – the highest object in creation – to placate the deities. Archdeacon Dandeson Crowther, who recognized this basic tenet in African traditional religious belief, was particularly sad to observe that even after several years of missionary activity around Nembe (Brass) in the delta region of southern Nigeria, some of the baptized chiefs had fallen back into the practice of human sacrifice and twin murder (Ade-Ajayi 1965: 226).

The High Priest Caiphas, who insisted that it was expedient that one man die lest the whole nation perish (John 18:14; cf. John 7:50-51), was probably prophesying, rather than echoing Jewish law, which stipulated that a man not be condemned without fair trial. Fundamental human rights to life and justice are not recognized in traditional religion. In the Igbo view, the individual counted only so far as he was part of the group, outside of which he lost his real worth. Thus to a considerable degree the individual was dominated by fear of the group, a fear with ultimate source in the belief in evil spirits (Sithole 1983). Despite this, Igbo society is achievement-oriented and validates competition and individual effort in the daily struggle for success.

Professor John S. Mbiti saw the diminished stature of the individual personality in most African societies in a different way. While recognizing the gregarious nature of the African peoples, Mbiti

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noted that man's security and importance lie within his own kingroup (1974: 158f.). It is the group that makes him aware of his existence. He can confidently say 'I am because we are' and 'because we are I am'. This conception is far from the extreme of rugged Western individualism and reduces the value of the individual, making him a pawn on the community chessboard, to be moved in the best interests of the collectivity.

The traditional view of morality in Africa is often said to be teleological in the sense that a community insists that social actions and relationships should be measured or guided by the consideration that the moral purposes of the created universe should not be disrupted or disorganized. Consequently, the good of the individual is often downplayed when a threat to the security of the entire clan is perceived. Similarly, in contracting marriage, the opinion of the couple is not paramount. The community has the final say. A young man does not marry a girl he loves until he has the approval of both their ancestors, families and villages.

Whatever the validity of the concept that power belongs to the people, it can be applied to suppress dissent, which, since action is meaningful only in relation to the good of the community, can be construed as subversion and sabotage.

A few Igbo proverbs that champion group rights and solidarity over the feelings and wishes of an individual or minority may be considered.

a) *Otu onye siere oha nri, oha erichaa ya, ma oha siere Otu onye, o gaghi ericha ya.*
An individual cannot finish the food cooked by a community but on the other hand a community could do so when an individual cooks.
By implication, individual effort does not measure up to that of group or community.

b) *Otu osisi adighi eto oke ohia.*
A tree does not make a forest.
This establishes that and individual cannot prosper on his own beyond a certain limit. It emphasizes the limitation of individual effort.

c) *Ora nwe Eze.*
The community appoints or owns the king.

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It is the community that appoints the king and should be seen as the king's master.

d) *Igwe bu ike.*
Unity is the strength of the leader or the one in authority.
Individual efforts cannot yield much unless harmonized with other productive forces.

e) *Ora bu ike Eze.*
Community and clan support is the basis of the strength and popularity of the king.
His individual effort does not avail much.

Although the individual is important in Igbo society he is seen as a function of the society in which he lives. Individual rights are assessed in relation to the will of the community. Community supremacy means that the individual may often be threatened.

Analysis, Summary and Conclusion

To appreciate the Igbo world, a set of concentric circles can be imagined. The Igbo world is also a continuum, a cyclical universe that repeats itself year after year. As E. E. Evans-Pritchard observed among the Nuer of the Sudan in East Africa, seasonal, even monthly, changes repeat from year to year (1939: 190; cf. Eliade, *The Myth of Eternal Return* 1974). In this scheme, god is outside. followed, as one progresses inward, by the major deities. Next come minor divinities and spirits, followed by ancestors and finally living man at the centre. E. G. Parrinder represented the African view of the cosmos with a triangle. At the apex of the triangle is the Supreme god, while at the other two sides are major divinities and the spirits. At the base of the triangle are ancestors, while man is at the centre (cited in Onunwa 1990a).

In both of the figures man is located at the centre. While not the lord of the universe in Igbo cosmology, man believes himself to be at the center of the universe where the pressures and influences of all other beings converge and operate. Man is then important. The Igbo world could be said to be anthropocentric but not theocentric. In the Igbo view it is man that makes the world livable. He is Mma-Ndu, which means 'beauty' or 'essence of life' in the world. Without man on earth life would be uneventful, dull and

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meaningless. The place of man is so central in the Igbo world that he continuously draws attention to himself. He strikes his chest when he feels offended or neglected and exclaims 'A whole me!' He attaches such importance to himself that in all his prayers, gods and other beings are requested to serve his own interests. Man prays not necessarily to glorify God but to draw his attention to the need for improvement in man's lot on earth.

Paradoxically man, who sees himself as the pivot on which other activities in the world revolve, is not accorded the same pride of place in the scheme of things by his fellows who make up the larger community. His interests will be sacrificed to theirs. Self-conception is at odds here with group conception. And despite this central position, ritual murder, charms and repressive taboos may erase individual importance and trample individual rights and lives.

Fear of the group has hampered people in traditional societies from developing independent thought. Even the Igbo, who are taught to be republican, outspoken, self-confident individuals, can become victims of repressive group domination and suppression. As a remedy to this situation and to elevate man's individual worth, the Igbo and other traditional African societies have the option of Christianity to which they have been historically exposed. Christian teaching has redeemed some Igbo from personality-crushing tradition and has helped in the reassertion of the community's egalitarian nature over local or foreign domination. Freedom from sin has then been accompanied by freedom from man-made policies and institutions. A new conception of justice for the individual has been introduced. One may posit such respect for human dignity as a prerequisite for other forms of community and national development.

If contemporary African societies are to grow from their present status of dependent, consumption-oriented economies to become productive, the worth and rank of the individual must be enhanced. Individual potential must be harnessed for societal growth and improvement. African societies must find a synthesis of the best of tradition and contemporary dynamism, a synthesis of the needs and rights of the individual and of society, in which neither seeks to suppress the other.

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The Anthropomorphic Stelae of the Ukraine: The Early Iconography of the Indo-Europeans

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Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft: A Sociobiological View of the Decay of Modern Society

Based on an original essay by
Alain de Benoist,
translated and interpreted by
Tomislav Sunic
Juniata College

Peaceful modern societies which respect the individual evolved from age-old familistic ties. The transition from band-type societies, through clan and tribal organizations, into nation-states was peaceful only when accomplished without disruption of the basic ties which link the individual to the larger society by a sense of a common history, culture and kinship. The sense of "belonging" to a nation by virtue of such shared ties promotes cooperation, altruism and respect for other members. In modern times, traditional ties have been weakened by the rise of mass societies and rapid global communication, factors which bring with them rapid social change and new philosophies which deny the significance of the sense of nationhood, and emphasize individualism and individualistic goals. The cohesion of societies has consequently been threatened, and replaced by multicultural and multi-ethnic societies and the overwhelming sense of lost identity in the mass global society in which Western man, at least, has come to conceive himself as belonging.

Sociologically, the first theorist to identify this change was the Arab scholar, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), who emphasized the tendency for mass urban societies to break down when the social solidarity characteristic of tribal and national societies disappeared. Ibn Khaldun saw dramatically the contrast between the morality of the nationalistic and ethnically unified Berbers of North Africa and the motley collation of peoples who called themselves Arabs under Arabic leadership, but did not possess the unity and sense of identity that had made the relatively small population of true Arabs who had built a widespread and Arabic-speaking Empire. Later it was Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) who introduced this thought to

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modern sociology. He did so in his theory of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1887). This theory revealed how early tribal or national (gemeinschaft) societies achieved harmonious collaboration and cooperation more or less automatically due to the common culture and sense of common genetic and cultural identity in which all members were raised. This avoided major conflicts concerning basic values since all shared a common set of mores and a common sense of destiny. However, as history progressed, larger multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies began to develop, and these Tönnies described as being united by *gesellschaft* ties. These were not united by any common set of values or historical identity, and collaboration was only maintained due to the need to exchange goods and services. In short, their existence came to depend on economic relations, and as a result of the diversity of cultural values, the lack of any "family feeling," and the emphasis on economic exchange and economic wealth, conflict over wealth and basic values was likely to disrupt the harmony of such societies at any time. In political terms, liberalism developed to eulogize the freedom of individuals from claims to national loyalty and support for national destiny, while Marxism grew out of the dissatisfaction felt by those who were less successful in achieving wealth and power, which now came to represent the primary goals of the individuals who were left at the mercy of the modern mass *gesellschaft* society. Nationalism and any sense of loyalty to the nation as a distinct ethnic, kinship unit came to be anathamized by both liberals and Marxists.

"A specter is haunting Europe – a specter of communism" wrote Marx in the preface of *The Manifesto*. A century later this specter became a mere phantom, with liberalism the dominant force. Over the last several decades, liberalism used communism as a scarecrow to legitimize itself. Today, however, with the bankruptcy of communism, this mode of "negative legitimation" is no longer convincing. At last, liberalism, in the sense of the emphasis on the individual above and even against that of the nation, actually endangers the individual by undermining the stability of the society which gives him identity, values, purpose and meaning, the social, cultural and biological nexus to which he owes his very being.

Fundamentally, classical liberalism was a doctrine which, out of an abstract individual, created the pivot of its survival. In its mildest form it merely emphasized individual freedom of action, and con-

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demned excessive bureaucratic involvement by government. But praiseworthy though its defense of individual freedom was, its claim that the ideal system is that in which there is the least possible emphasis on nationhood leads to situations which in fact endanger the freedom of the individual. In its extreme form, classical liberalism has developed into universal libertarianism, and at this point it comes close to advocating anarchy.

From the sociological standpoint, in its extreme form, modern internationalist liberalism defines itself totally in terms of the *gesellschaft* society of Tönnies. It denies the historical concept of the nation state by rejecting the notion of any common interest between individuals who traditionally shared a common heritage. In the place of nationhood it proposes to generate a new international social pattern centered on the individual's quest for optimal personal and economic interest. Within the context of extreme liberalism, only the interplay of individual interests creates a functional society – a society in which the whole is viewed only as a chance aggregate of anonymous particles. The essence of modern liberal thought is that order is believed to be able to consolidate itself by means of all-out economic competition, that is, through the battle of all against all, requiring governments to do no more than set certain essential ground rules and provide certain services which the individual alone cannot adequately provide. Indeed, modern liberalism has gone so far along this path that it is today directly opposed to thee goals of classical liberalism and libertarianism in that it denies the individual any inalienable right to property, but still shares with modern liberalism and with libertarianism an antagonism toward the idea of nationhood. Shorn of the protection of a society which identifies with its members because of a shared national history and destiny, the individual is left to grasp struggle for his own survival, without the protective sense of community which his forebears enjoyed since the earliest of human history.

Decadence in modern mass multi-cultural societies begins at a moment when there is no longer any discernable meaning within society. Meaning is destroyed by raising individualism above all other values because rampant individualism encourages the anarchical proliferation of egotism at the expense of the values that were once part of the national heritage, values that give form to the concept of nationhood and the nation state, to a state which is more than just a

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political entity, and which corresponds to a particular people who are conscious of sharing a common heritage for the survival of which they are prepared to make personal sacrifices.

Man evolved in cooperating groups united by common cultural and genetic ties, and it is only in such a setting that the individual can feel truly free, and truly protected. Men cannot live happily alone and without values or any sense of identity: such a situation leads to nihilism, drug abuse, criminality and worse. With the spread of purely egotistic goals at the expense of the altruistic regard for family and nation, the individual begins to talk of his rights rather than his duties, for he no longer feels any sense of destiny, of belonging to and being a part of a greater and more enduring entity. He no longer rejoices in the secure belief that he shares in a heritage which it is part of his common duty to protect – he no longer feels that he has anything in common with those around him. In short, he feels lonely and oppressed. Since all values have become strictly personal, everything is now equal to everything; e.g., nothing equals nothing.

"A society without strong beliefs," declared Régis Debray in his interview with J.P. Enthoven in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, (October 10, 1981), "is a society about to die." Modern liberalism is particularly critical of nationalism. Hence, the question needs to be raised: Can modern liberal society provide strong unifying communal beliefs in view of the fact that on the one hand it views communal life as nonessential, while on the other, it remains impotent to envision any belief – unless this belief is reducible to economic conduct?

Moreover there seems to be an obvious relationship between the negation and the eclipse of the meaning and the destruction of the historical dimension of the social corpus. Modern liberals encourage "narcissism;" they live in the perpetual now. In liberal society, the individual is unable to put himself in perspective, because putting himself in perspective requires a clear and a collectively perceived consciousness of common heritage and common adherence. As Régis Debray remarks, "In the capacity of isolated subjects men can never become the subjects of action and acquire the capability of making history." (*Critique de la raison politique*, op. cit. p. 207). In liberal societies, the suppression of the sense of meaning and identity embedded in national values leads to the dissolution of social cohesion as well as to the dissolution of group consciousness. This dissolution, in turn, culminates in the end of history.

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Being the most typical representative of the ideology of equalitarianism, modern liberalism, in both its libertarian and socialist variants, appears to be the main factor in this dissolution of the ideal of nationhood. When the concept of society, from the sociological standpoint, suggests a system of simple 'horizontal interactions,' then this notion inevitably excludes social form. As a manifestation of solidarity, society can only be conceived in terms of shared identity – that is, in terms of historical values and cultural traditions (cf., Edgar Morin: "The communal myth gives society its national cohesion.") By contrast, liberalism undoes nations and systematically destroys their sense of history, tradition, loyalty and value. Instead of helping man to elevate himself to the sphere of the superhuman, it divorces him from all 'grand projects' by declaring these projects 'dangerous' from the point of view of equality. No wonder, therefore, that the management of man's individual well-being becomes his sole preoccupation. In the attempt to free man from all constraints, liberalism brings man under the yoke of other constraints – which now downgrade him to the lowest level. Liberalism does not defend liberty; it destroys the independence of the individual. By eroding historical memories, liberalism extricates man from history. It proposes to ensure his means of existence, but robs him of his reason to live and deprives him of the possibility of having a destiny.

There are two ways of conceiving of man and society. The fundamental value may be placed on the individual, and when this is done the whole of mankind is conceived as the sum total of all individuals – a vast faceless proletariat – instead of as a rich fabric of diverse nations, cultures and races. It is this conception that is inherent in liberal and socialist thought. The other view, which appears to be more compatible with man's evolutionary and sociobiological character, is when the individual is seen as enjoying a specific biological and culture legacy – a notion which recognizes the importance of kinship and nationhood. In the first instance, mankind, as a sum total of individuals, appears to be "contained" in each individual human being; that is, one becomes first a "human being," and only then, as by accident, a member of a specific culture or a people. In the second instance, mankind comprises a complex phylogenetic and historic network, whereby the freedom of the individual is guaranteed by the protection of family by his nation, which provide him with a sense of identity and with a meaningful

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orientation to the entire world population. It is by virtue of their organic adherence to the society of which they are a part that men build their humanity.

As exponents of the first concept we encounter Descartes, the Encyclopaedists, and the emphasis on "rights"; nationality and society emanate from the individual, by elective choice, and are revokable at any time. As proponents of the second concept we find J.G. Herder and G.W. Leibniz, who stress the reality of cultures and ethnicity. Nationality and society are rooted in biological, cultural and historical heritage. The difference between these two concepts becomes particularly obvious when one compares how they visualize history and the structure of the real. Nationalists are proponents of holism. Nationalists see the individual as a kinsman, sustained by the people and community which nurtures and protects him, and with which he is proud to identify. The individual's actions represent an act of participation in the life of his people, and freedom of action is very real because, sharing in the values of his associates, the individual will seldom seek to threaten the *basic* values of the community with which he identifies. Societies which lack this basic sense of national unity are inherently prone to suffer from repeated situations wherein the opposing values of its egotistical members conflict with each other.

Furthermore, proponents of nationhood contend that a society or a people can survive only when: a) they remain aware of their cultural and historical origins; b) when they can assemble around a mediator, be it individual, or symbolic, who is capable of reassembling their energies and catalyzing their will to have a destiny; c) when they can retain the courage to designate their enemy. None of these conditions have been realized in societies that put economic gain above all other values, and which consequently: a) dissolve historical memories; b) extinguish the sublime and eliminate subliminal ideals; c) assume that it is possible not to have enemies.

The results of the rapid change from national or tribal-oriented societies to the modern, anti-national individualism prevalent in contemporary "advanced" societies have been very well described by Cornelius Castoriadis: "Western societies are in absolute decomposition. There is no longer a vision of the whole that could permit them to determine and apply any political action ... Western societies have practically ceased to be [nation] states ... Simply put, they have become agglomerations of lobbies which, in a myopic manner, tear

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the society apart; where nobody can propose a coherent policy, and where everybody is capable of blocking an action deemed hostile to his own interests." (*Libération*, 16 and 21 December, 1981).

Modern liberalism has suppressed patriotic nationhood into a situation in which politics has been reduced to a "delivery service" decision-making process resembling the economic "command post," statesmen have been reduced to serving as tools for special interest groups, and nations have become little more than markets. The heads of modern liberal states have no options but to watch their citizenry being somatized by civilizational ills such as violence, delinquency, and drugs.

Ernst Jünger once remarked that the act of veiled violence is more terrible than open violence. (*Journal* IV, September 6, 1945). And he also noted: "Slavery can be substantially aggravated when it assumes the appearance of liberty." The tyranny of modern liberalism creates the illusion inherent in its own principles. It proclaims itself for liberty and cries out to defend "human rights" at the moment when it oppresses the most. The dictatorship of the media and the "spiral of silence" appear to be almost as effective in depriving the citizenry of its freedom by imprisonment. In the West, there is no need to kill: suffice it to cut someone's microphone. To kill somebody by silence is a very elegant kind of murder, which in practice yields the same dividends as a real assassination – an assassination which, in addition, leaves the assassin with good conscience. Moreover, one should not forget the importance of such a type of assassination. Rare are those who silence their opponents for fun.

Patriotic nationhood does not target the notion of "formal liberties," as some rigorous Marxists do. Rather, its purpose is to demonstrate that "collective liberty," i.e., the liberty of peoples to be themselves and to continue to enjoy the privilege of having a destiny, does not result from the simple addition of individual liberties. Proponents of nationhood instead contend that the "liberties" granted to individuals by liberal societies are frequently nonexistent; they represent simulacra of what real liberties should be. It does not suffice to be free to do something. Rather, what is needed is one's ability to participate in determining the course of historical events. Societies dominated by modern liberal traditions are "permissive" only in so far as their general macrostability strips the populace of any real participation in the actual decision-making process. As the sphere in

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which the citizenry is permitted to "do everything" becomes larger, the sense of nationhood becomes paralyzed and loses its direction.

Liberty cannot be reduced to the sentiment that one has about it. For that matter, both the slave and the robot could equally well perceive themselves as free. The meaning of liberty is inseparable from the founding anthropology of man, an individual sharing a common history and common culture in a common community. Decadence vaporizes peoples, frequently in the gentlest of manners. This is the reason why individuals acting as individuals can only hope to flee tyranny, but cooperating actively as a nation they can often defeat tyranny.

* Alain de Benoist is a French philosopher and the editor of the Quarterly *Krisis*. He is the author of several books, including *Comment peut-on etre paien?*

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Book Review

The Biological Roots of Human Nature
Forging Links between Evolution and Behavior
Timothy H. Goldsmith
New York: Oxford University Press

In this stimulating book, Goldsmith argues that biology has a great deal to say that should be of interest to social scientists, historians, philosophers, and humanists in general. He believes that anyone studying the social behavior of humans must take into consideration both proximate cause – the physiology, biochemistry, and social mechanisms of behavior – and ultimate cause, how this behavior came to exist in evolutionary time.

Goldsmith, a neurobiologist, draws examples from neurobiology, psychology, and ethology (behavioral evolution). The result is a work that overcomes many of the misconceptions that have hindered the rich contributions the biological sciences have to offer concerning the evolution of human society, behavior, and sense of identity. Among the key topics addressed are the nature of biological explanation, the relationship between genes and behavior, those aspects of behavior most likely to respond to natural selection, the relationship between evolution and learning, and some probable modes of interaction between cultural and biological evolution.

Virtually all social philosophy up until this time has tended to ignore the biological nature of mankind, and to assume "free will," the ability of man to operate independently of the laws of causality which so far as science is aware govern all that happens in the universe. The social sciences have to the present concentrated more on environmental than biological causes for human behavior, as though mankind existed above the level of physical and biological reality. This is now changing, although many who teach social science do not seem to realize it yet, so subdivided is the academic world into its own fields of bureaucratic origin. But it is sure to change eventually, short of the full scale implementation of some Stalinist Lysenko-type hegemony.

By reexamining the role of biological explanation in the domain of social development, the author has significantly advanced a more

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well-rounded view of human evolution and shed new light on the perennial question of what it means to be human. His book will appeal to biologists, psychologists and social scientists, humanists, and interested general readers.

National Integration and Local Security
The Miri of the Nuba Mountains in the Sudan
Gerd Baumann
Clarendon Press, Oxford

Although this book is primarily a detailed ethnography of a Nuba society, it is also an enthralling account of the position in which a minority ethic people find themselves when incorporated into a political state dominated by an alien population. It is, in short, an excellent illustration of the harm done by the European governments when they pulled out of Africa after World War II at a time when de-colonization was all the fashion, thereby handing over control of political states which were by no means homogeneous "national" states, without any regard to ethnic boundaries. On the very first page of his introduction the author quotes an official Sudanese government publication on this matter: "The colonial paradox of creating nation-states out of previously segmented and even mutually independent units ... is especially true of the Sudan." The book's title is itself misleading, since there is no way from an anthropological point of view that Sudan can be called a "nation-state."

The original colonial power in Nubia was ancient Egypt, with the Arabs invading and settling the northern parts of the country at a later date, leaving only the south in the hands of the African Negro population. It was the British who finally gave independence to this remarkably diverse territory, and in the pro-multicultural spirit of the day the British government declined to redivide the colony into anything resembling an ethnic "nation-state"; they simply handed over the old colony with all its governmental systems and borders intact to a new government which it hoped would rule democratically.

That was not to be the case. The Moslem Arab majority government sought to "integrate" Nuba society into the predominantly Moslem "national" state. The result was a gross suppression of the Nuban peoples and their culture. But although the Nuba culture was fractured beyond repair, family and village ties still remain.

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